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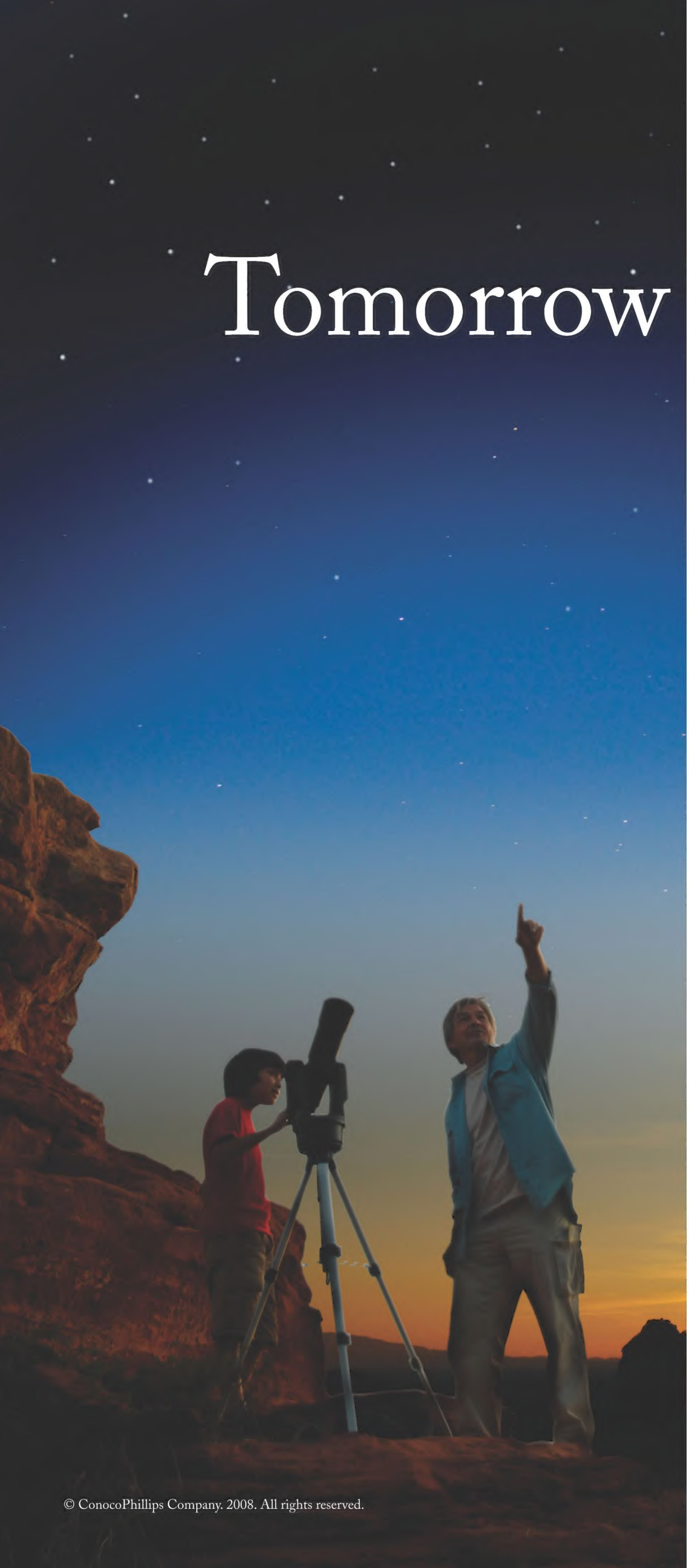

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A Sufi pilgrim dances at the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, in Sehwan Sharif, Pakistan, in 2006.

PHOTOGRAPH BY AARON HUEY

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"White was documenting an unknown population," says an early American historian about the artist's portraits of Algonquians.

JOHN WHITE, WATERCOLOR, C. 1585

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On the Tel Aviv beach near the ancient city of Jaffa

Here's a sunny "Shalom" from Israel's first family of surfing. Armour Kanzapolski, shown here with two of his children on the beach at Tel Aviv, a city which celebrates its 100th Anniversary in 2009. Behind him is the 4,000-year-old city of Jaffa where it is said Jonah met a whale. Armour is the son of Shamai "Topsi" Kanzapolski who brought surfing to Israel in the 60's. He is a professional surfing instructor and part of his family's surfboard industry in Tel Aviv. His goal: to make sure the beaches of Israel are always clean and beautiful, the water free of pollution, and that you're always welcome to swim, surf and have a glorious time on the beaches of Israel.

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FACT

All of us, wherever we live, are joined by flowing water, and all the waters of the sea, whether they be at the icy poles or in the clear warmth of the tropics, are one.[1]

Sony is a proud supporter of the Sant Ocean Hall at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History.

[1]Excerpted from *Smithsonian Ocean* by Deborah Cramer

FROM THE EDITOR

Big Deals

Revelry and Architecture

BY CAREY WINFREY

NICHOLAS SCHMIDLE, who lives in Washington, D.C., spent nearly two years in Pakistan as a fellow of the Institute of Current World Affairs, which funds overseas writing fellowships. An article Schmidle published earlier this year in the *New York Times Magazine* about a resurgent Taliban got him in hot water with the authorities, and he left Pakistan precipitately. But the country nagged at him. "I just felt that mainstream Islam in Pakistan was so sorely overlooked," he says. It was mystical, peaceful Sufism, in particular, that held his attention. "While the Taliban were grabbing all the headlines and wielding the big guns, the Sufis had the numbers and represented the true mainstream."

On assignment in Pakistan for SMITHSONIAN, Schmidle and photographer Aaron Huey went to a Sufi festival called an *urs*, at which devotees abandon themselves to spirited dancing and worshipful revelry. "I was absolutely stunned at the scale of it and the passion and intensity," says Schmidle, who joined in. "To find myself dancing and totally lost in the intensity of the whole thing was a pretty overwhelming experience. I had to shake myself and say, wow, I now understand why people go to such great lengths and make great sacrifices to come to this thing." His story, "Faith & Ecstasy," begins on page 36.

Schmidle: Stunned by the passion and intensity

AARON HUEY

FERGUS M. BORDEWICH WROTE two of the feature stories in this issue. The first documents efforts to save one of the world's most beautiful and important structures, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia (see "Fading Glory," p. 54). "I think it is the greatest building that survives from the ancient world," says Bordewich. "There was virtually nothing that even remotely approached it until modern times. It's just an amazing building."

Bordewich's second story also has to do with an amazing building, the U.S. Capitol, whose $621 million visitor center opens this month. In researching his latest book, *Washington: The Making of the American Capital*, Bordewich found himself intrigued by the Capitol's original architect, William Thornton, a British native of Tortola, in the Caribbean. "He was a Renaissance man. He was an inventor. He helped finance a steamboat. He was a linguist. But more than anything, he was a passionate, inspired abolitionist. And when he heard of the design competition for the U.S. Capitol, he drew plans, and he won. He's a remarkable individual." "Capitol Fellow" begins on page 78.

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LETTERS READERS RESPOND TO THE **OCTOBER** ISSUE

Stephen Kinzer's sober review of Iran's history and interactions with the West and Russia ["Inside Iran's Fury"] is a must read for every American. It does not absolve what the radical clerics and President Ahmadinejad are saying and doing, but it helps us to understand the historical precedents that make them distrust our intentions.

KASHIF HASSAN, DIAMOND BAR, CALIFORNIA

DEFENDING THE SHAH

KINZER'S dismissal of the regime of Mohammad Reza Shah as purely evil, without mentioning the democratic reforms he put in place, sadly, makes the rest of his "scholarship" suspect. The Shah, for all his greed and corruption, tried to lead Iran into the 20th century. He attempted to bring women out from under the veil and sent them to school. He struggled to bring Western ethics to a country mired in religious fanaticism that was more brutal than his secret police ever thought to be. I spent seven years in Iran during his reign, and while there is no doubt his secret police were feared, are they any worse than our own "renditions"? In today's climate of suspicion, there is no room for biased or incomplete history.

GALER BARNES
ELK, CALIFORNIA

ONE ASPECT of Iran's fury Kinzer did not discuss is the concession that led to the discovery of oil in Iran's Khuzestan region in 1908. Weary of Russian loans, Mozaffar al-Din Shah awarded an oil concession to the financier William D'Arcy that covered most of Iran, save a few provinces bordering Russia. Knowing Iran's hold on Khuzestan was weak, the British negotiated through local Bakhtiari clans for access, land purchases and protection, then extracted oil with little concern for just royalties to the central government. This, plus the 1907 Anglo-Russian Agreement that split Iran into Russian and British spheres, set in motion the animosity against the West that was to plague British and American interests in the region, even before the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 or the coup of 1953.

JAY HATHEWAY
MADISON, WISCONSIN

BLAME GAME

IF I WERE deputy manager of Westlands Water District and knew you were writing a story about a crashed salmon fishery caused in large part by poisoned and depleted water resources ["Farewell to the King?"], I, too, would probably try to blame environmentalists. But Mr. Jason Peltier should take his head out of the selenium-choked sand and look around: making the desert bloom might not have been such a good idea, and scapegoating fishermen and environmentalists won't water the cotton fields.

JOHN W. WALL
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SWIFTBOATING GEORGE

RE: YOUR FICTITIOUS article of 3 January 1789, about "swiftboating George Washington" [Last Page: "Same Olde, Same Olde"], I know not of which Delaware boat veterans you refer, but the men of my Regiment were the only ones to ferry members of the Continental Army. I was the coxswain of the last boat to cross the river, which included Gen. Washington. Your claim that he was lodged in a local inn with wife Martha can only be a most perjurious fabrication, as he personally led our successful attack on Hessian troops in Trenton the next morning. I request that your reporter verify accounts of this glorious victory with actual participants before falsely casting aspersions on the character of Gen. Washington. To do otherwise would set a poor example and a sad precedent for future news printers of our fledgling nation. I can only infer that you still harbor Tory sentiments for His most arrogant Majesty, King George III of Great Britain.

ROBERT A. ERBETTA
MARBLEHEAD, MASSACHUSETTS

CORRECTION

AN IMAGE on page 62 does not depict Darius (c. 549-486 B.C.), as the caption says, but Darius III (c. 380-330 B.C.).

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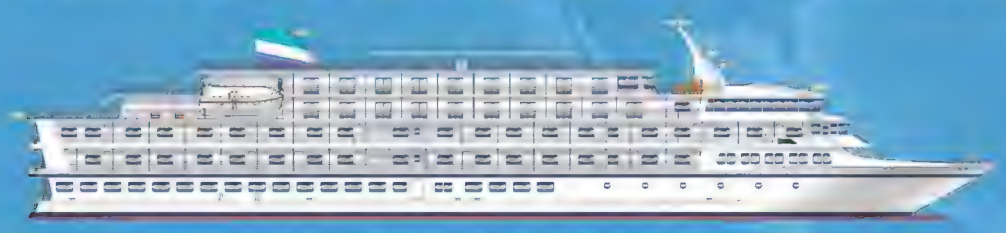

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Moment of Reckoning

One of the three civil rights workers murdered in Mississippi in 1964 was James Chaney. His younger brother, Ben, would never be the same **BY HANK KLIBANOFF**

IN THE 44 DAYS that his brother and two other young civil rights workers were missing in Neshoba County, Mississippi, 12-year-old Ben Chaney was quiet and withdrawn. He kept his mother constantly in sight as she obsessively cleaned their house, weeping all the while.

Bill Eppridge, a *Life* magazine photographer, arrived in Neshoba County shortly after the bodies of James Chaney, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman were pulled from the muck of an earthen dam on August 4, 1964. Inside the Chaney home in nearby Meridian, Eppridge felt that Ben was overwhelmed, "not knowing where he was or where he should have been," he recalls. "That draws you to somebody, because you wonder what is going on there."

On August 7, Eppridge watched as the Chaney family left to bury their eldest son. As they awaited a driver, Fannie Lee Chaney and her husband, Ben Sr., sat in the front seat of a sedan; their daughters, Barbara, Janice and Julia, sat in the back with Ben, who hunched forward so he'd fit.

Eppridge took three frames. As he did so, he could see Ben's bewilderment harden into a cold stare directed right at the lens. "There were a dozen questions in that look," Eppridge says. "As they left, he looked at me and said, three times, 'I'm gonna kill 'em, I'm gonna kill 'em, I'm gonna kill 'em.' "

The frames went unpublished that year in *Life*; most news photographs of the event showed a sobbing Ben Chaney Jr. inside the church. The one on this page is included in "Road to Freedom," a photography exhibit organized by Atlanta's High Museum and on view through

BILL EPPRIDGE

As James Chaney's family awaited the drive to his burial, 12-year-old Ben gazed outward. "There were a dozen questions in that look," says photographer Bill Eppridge.

Two months shy of 18, Chaney and two other young men drove south with a vague plan to buy guns.

"He just looks scared," Eppridge (below: in 2005) says of the Ben Chaney in the photographer's Polaroid from 1970 (left). "I can imagine I was afraid," says Chaney (right: in 2008 in New York City). "I was in jail." He served 13 years on murder charges.

March 9 at the Smithsonian's S. Dillon Ripley Center in Washington, D.C., presented by the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Chaney, now 56, cannot recall what he told Eppridge in 1964, but he remembers being livid that his mother had to suffer and that his father's generation had not risen up years before so that his brother's generation wouldn't have had to. "I *know* I was angry," he says.

Ben had lost his idol. Nine years older, James Earl Chaney—J.E., Ben called him—had bought Ben his first football uniform and taken him for haircuts. He had taken Ben along as he organized prospective black voters in the days leading to Freedom Summer. Ben, who had been taken into custody himself for demonstrating for civil rights, recalls J.E. walking down the jailhouse corridor to secure his release, calling, "Where's my brother?"

"He treated me," Ben says, "like *I* was a hero."

After the funeral, a series of threats drove the Chaneys from Mississippi. With help from the Schwerners, Goodmans and others, they moved to New York City. Ben enrolled in a private, majority-white school and adjusted to life in the North. But by 1969 he was restless. In Harlem, he says, he was elated to see black people running their own businesses and determining their own fates. He joined the Black Panther Party and the Black Liberation Army.

In May 1970, two months shy of 18, Chaney and two other young men drove to Florida with a vague plan to buy guns. Soon, five people, including one of their number, were dead in Florida and South Carolina.

Chaney said he didn't even witness any of the slayings. He was acquitted of murder in South Carolina. But in Florida—where the law allows for murder charges to be brought in crimes that result in death—he was convicted of murder in the first degree and sentenced to three life terms.

One of his first visitors in jail was Bill Eppridge. Before setting up his cameras, Eppridge fired off a quick Polaroid. His editor liked the Polaroid best. *Life* readers saw Ben Chaney with his eyes framed by prison bars. "He just looks scared," says Eppridge, who, after the weekly *Life* folded in 1972, went to work for *Sports Illustrated*.

"I can imagine I was afraid," Chaney says. "I was in jail."

He served 13 years. Paroled in 1983, he started the James Earl Chaney Foundation to clean up his brother's vandalized grave site in Meridian; since 1985, he has worked as a legal clerk for former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, the lawyer who secured his parole. He envisions creating a Chaney, Goodman, Schwerner Center for Human Rights in Meridian.

In 1967, eighteen men faced federal charges of civil rights violations in the slayings of Chaney, Schwerner and Goodman. Seven were convicted by an all-white jury, eight were acquitted and three were released after jurors deadlocked. The state of Mississippi prosecuted no one for 38 years. But in 2005—after six years of new reporting on the case by Jerry Mitchell of the Jackson *Clarion-Ledger*—a sawmill operator named Edgar Ray Killen was indicted on charges of murder.

On June 21, 2005, exactly 41 years after the three men were killed, a racially integrated jury, without clear evidence of Killen's intent, found him guilty of manslaughter instead. Serving three consecutive 20-year terms, he is the only one of six living suspects to face state charges in the case.

Ben Chaney sees it this way: somewhere out there are men like him—accomplices to murder. He did his time, he says, they should do theirs. "I'm not as sad as I was," he adds. "But I'm still angry."

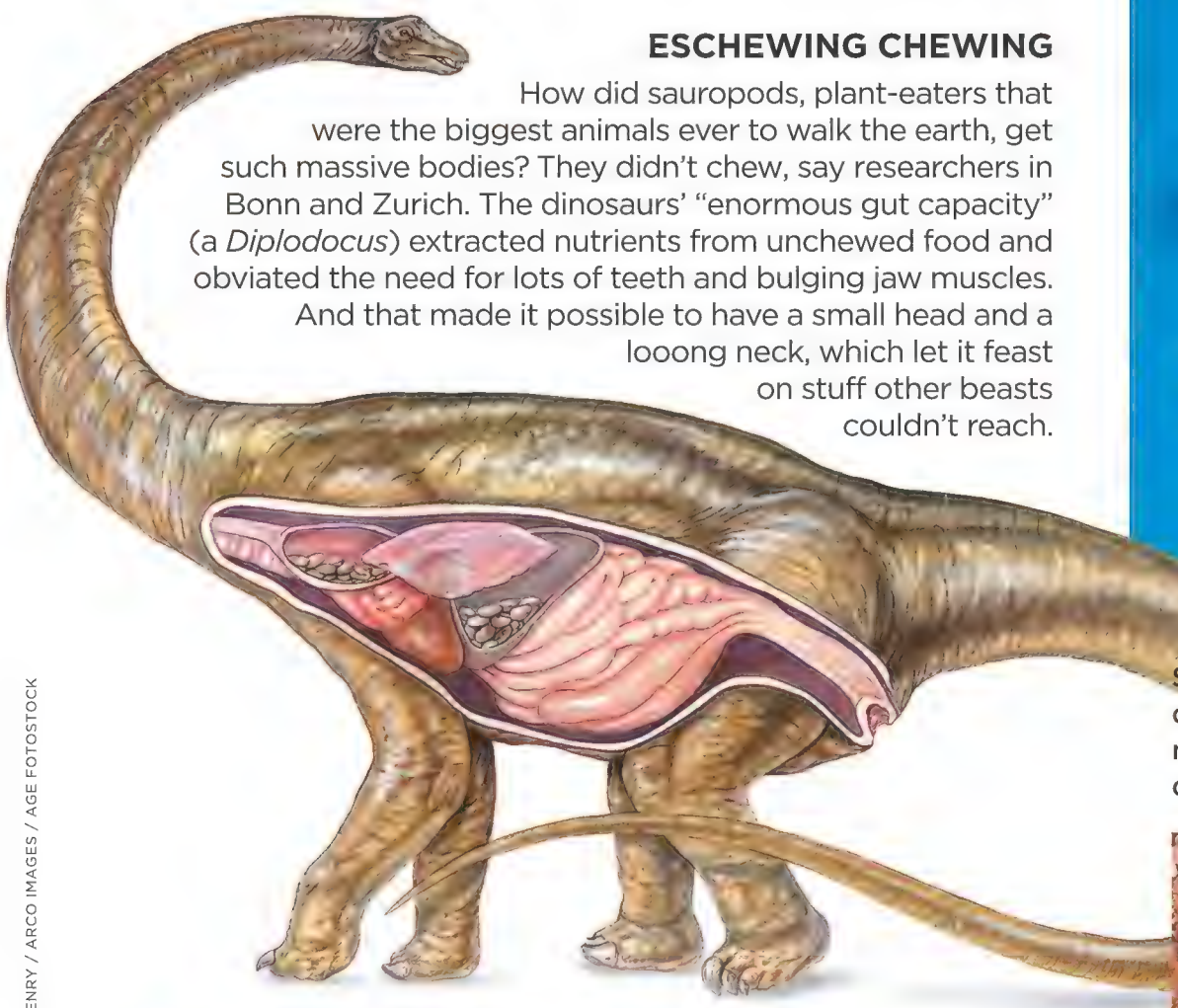
HANK KLIBANOFF *is the author, with Gene Roberts, of* The Race Beat, *which received the Pulitzer Prize for history last year.*

BILL EPPRIDGE; ANDREW KIST; BRIAN AHO

WILD THINGS

LIFE AS WE KNOW IT

BY AMANDA BENSEN, T.A. FRAIL, MEGAN GAMBINO, ANIKA GUPTA, SARAH ZIELINSKI



ESCHEWING CHEWING

How did sauropods, plant-eaters that were the biggest animals ever to walk the earth, get such massive bodies? They didn't chew, say researchers in Bonn and Zurich. The dinosaurs' "enormous gut capacity" (a *Diplodocus*) extracted nutrients from unchewed food and obviated the need for lots of teeth and bulging jaw muscles. And that made it possible to have a small head and a looong neck, which let it feast on stuff other beasts couldn't reach.

MAKING WAVES

Add noise to the list of climate change consequences. Carbon dioxide dissolved in ocean water makes it more acidic—and more efficient at transmitting sound waves. Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute marine chemists predict that by 2050, ocean sounds such as whale calls may travel 70 percent farther than today; the effect on marine animals is unknown.

THE COLLECTIVE GOOD

Scientists in Brazil have observed an unusual act of selflessness. When *Forelius* ants retire for the night, one or more workers remain outside the colony, kicking sand to seal the entrance (left).

If that protects those within from predators or rain, it also dooms the outside ants to die overnight of exposure. It's the first known case of "pre-emptive self-sacrifice" among insects.

Observed

NAME: The black bear (*Ursus americanus*).
GOOD NEWS BEARS: Urban-dwelling females, eating a garbage-fortified diet, gain weight faster and have cubs younger than their forest-dwelling counterparts, according to a study in western Nevada led by the Wildlife Conservation Society.
BAD NEWS BEARS: Urban females die younger.
WORSE NEWS BEARS: Despite their reproductive head start, urban animals aren't increasing the overall bear population. Any gains are more than offset by urban hazards, especially collisions with cars. Says the lead researcher: "Urban areas are becoming the ultimate bear traps."

MONKEY BEWARE

Bonobos (right) are known as the peace-loving members of the hominid family, led by females and solving conflicts with love, not war. Now, for the first time, primatologists in Congo have documented three instances of bonobos killing monkeys. In contrast to chimpanzees—which hunt and live in male-dominated groups—the bonobo hunting parties included females. So much for the idea that, among apes, hunting is related to male aggression.

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MY KIND OF TOWN
LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

"Horses define Lexington in many ways," says Edwards (with Thoroughbred Park's statues).

Splendor in the Bluegrass

Far from her Northern roots, the best-selling novelist discovers a new sense of home amid rolling hills and Thoroughbred farms

BY KIM EDWARDS PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK CORNELISON

WHEN I MOVED TO Lexington, Kentucky, 12 years ago, I often had the sense of having taken half a step back in time. It was nothing I could pinpoint exactly. Though Lexington is small enough that I can drive to pretty much any part of town in 15 minutes, it has all the cultural amenities you'd hope to find in a city of 255,000. There's an opera house and a symphony, organic food stores, farmers' markets, art films at the Kentucky Theatre, a terrific independent bookstore, a bluegrass music festival in June and an art fair in August. In recent years, condos have cropped up all over downtown, reflecting a new interest in urban living. It is a contemporary place.

Still, the past keeps drifting up, like memory. I first drove here in the spring, when the dogwoods and the redbuds were spilling like foam and fire against the green hills, the road curving amid horse farms and framed by miles of dry stone walls. Perhaps those timeless images shaped my initial impressions. Or maybe it was finding a local institution like Wheeler Pharmacy, founded 50 years ago, which still has a soda fountain and grill and a steady stream of regulars who line up for breakfast, lunch or after-school snacks, often ordering Ale-8-One, a ginger-flavored soft drink made nearby since 1926. The baggers in the grocery store all politely called me ma'am. To my amazement, they routinely offered to carry my groceries to the car. The hardware store, now closed, smelled

MARK CORNELISON / WPN

THEY BATTLED HOSTILE NEIGHBORS,
CIVIL WAR, AND BLOODTHIRSTY LIONS.
AND NOW THEY'VE TAKEN OVER THE MFA.

ART AND EMPIRE
TREASURES FROM
ASSYRIA
IN THE BRITISH MUSEUM

MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON SEPTEMBER 21, 2008 – JANUARY 4, 2009 FOR TICKETS VISIT MFA.ORG

Set of protective spirits. Near Eastern, Mesopotamian, Assyrian, Neo-Assyrian, 645–640 B.C. Gypsum. The Trustees of the British Museum ME 118918. © The Trustees of the British Museum 2008. All rights reserved.

THE BRITISH MUSEUM

"Art and Empire: Treasures from Assyria in the British Museum" is a collaboration between the British Museum and the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

mfa BOSTON

of dust and metal and new wood, just like my grandfather's lumber business in upstate New York, where as a child I used to play in the aisles amid the bins of nails and walls of doorknobs.

Lexington, which was named for the initial battle of the Revolutionary War at Lexington, Massachusetts, was founded in 1775 at the edge of McConnell Springs, and has expanded outward in concentric rings. My first house here was built in 1930, on what was then the very edge of town, from the same calcium-rich limestone that nourishes the famous blue-

Along with its soda fountain and grill, Lexington's Wheeler Pharmacy offers such old-time favorites as Ale-8-One (above right).

grass (no, it's not really blue, unless it's allowed to flower) and the horses that thrive on it. Our house had a wide front porch; when we sat there on summer evenings, neighbors would say hello and often pause to chat. Though Lexington is not a small town, it sometimes feels like one, with circles of acquaintance overlapping once, then again; the person you meet by chance at the library or the pool may turn out to be the best friend of your down-the-street neighbor. Maybe that's why people are so friendly here, so willing to be unhurried. After all, you don't want to engage in road rage when the person in the next car might be your child's future teacher or your dentist's father. There's a graciousness that informs life here, which I remember from my childhood, too.

Lexington is home to the University of Kentucky, where my husband and I teach, as well as to Transylvania University, the oldest college established west of the Allegheny Mountains, and several multinational companies; people come and go from all over the world. Yet a substantial number of Lexingtonians have roots that go back generations, some all the way to Daniel Boone. They grew up lifeguarding at the neighborhood pool, or they remember the construction of the Interstate and when my neighborhood, built in 1973, was still a dairy farm. If they're not from Lexington, they may have grown up in the surrounding counties and may still have a "home place," a family farm to which they remain connected.

Traditionally, Kentucky writers, most notably Wendell Berry and Bobbie Ann Mason, have drawn deeply on this sense of place. There's a high demand for land now, a constant tension between those who favor expansion and those who recognize the unique beauty of the surrounding horse farms as one of Lexington's greatest appeals. Bumper stickers argue "Growth Is Good" and "Growth Destroys Bluegrass Forever." Place matters, as does a sense of history and a feeling of connection to the land.

Although this affirmation of history tends to favor the status quo, for better or for worse, and can draw a line between those who've always lived here and those who've more recently arrived, it's also something I understand. I grew up in Skaneateles, a small town in New York's Finger Lakes region, where parts of my family have lived for five generations. I can walk the streets there and point out my father's childhood home, the houses my grandfather built, the farm where my great-great-uncle worked after he emigrated from England in the 1880s. I know every inch of that town, and being there helps me remember who I am, where I came from and what I once dreamed. As in Lexington, in Skaneateles there was a core of people whose families had been around for generations and had no inclination to leave, people who maintained a kind of good-humored resignation in the face of waves of tourists and newcomers who swept through with visions of grand change. "Oh, they blow in, they blow up, and they blow out," I remember my father saying, with a shrug—this too would pass, and it usually did.

Like upstate New York, Kentucky is beautiful. The stunning Red River Gorge and Mammoth Caves are both nearby. There are few natural lakes here, and although I yearn for expanses of water, Kentucky is rich with streams and rivers. From my house, I can drive ten miles to Raven Run Nature Sanctuary and still be within the Lexington city limits. There are numerous hikes to take, past weathered tobacco barns, through meadows and woodlands. My favorite goes through the woods and crosses streams and ends at

MARK CORNELISON / WPN (2)

a dramatic cliff above a bend in the Kentucky River. Far below, kayakers drift slowly against dark water.

Leaving Raven Run, I sometimes turn toward the river instead of away, following the road as it steadily curves and twists to the water's edge. There is no bridge. However, the Valley View Ferry, which has been running since 1785, crosses back and forth on a regular basis. The ferry is now run jointly by local governments, and it's free. When my daughters were small, we sometimes took the ferry over and then back again, just for fun.

bronze statues of jockeys astride their horses race toward an imaginary finish line. They run in front of a fountain and a dry stone wall; in a small, green park adjacent, other bronze horses and their foals graze. Lexington will host the World Equestrian Games in 2010, and building for that is already underway at the Kentucky Horse Park, north of town. The rotunda of the Lexington Public Library boasts the world's largest ceiling clock and a five-story Foucault pendulum that is encircled with a frieze depicting the history of the horse in the

Many in Lexington (above: Main Street) believe they live in a place impossible to leave.

Your understanding of a place changes the longer you stay; you discover more, and your own life gets woven into the fabric of the community. I've experienced several different Lexingtons during my years here, and there is always more to learn. Sports matter, for instance, especially basketball, and it's impossible not to be affected, even if, like me, you don't really follow the teams. On game days people stream into and out of town, and unless you want to get stranded in traffic—I've known people forced to abandon their cars a couple of blocks from home because of street closures and crowds—it's a good idea to plan your day around the game. For many here, a crisp fall Saturday is not complete without a tailgate party, replete with tents, margarita machines and endless tables of food.

Of course, there are horses. At the entrance to downtown, seven life-size

Bluegrass. The clock face, based on Eadweard Muybridge photographs taken in 1872, illuminates sequentially images of horses in motion, circling the atrium. The clock, pendulum and frieze were gifts from Lucille Caudill Little, a Lexington philanthropist who dreamed about them one night and woke up determined to make them a reality.

Horses define Lexington in many ways, in the beauty of the Thoroughbreds cantering across the rolling land, in the mounted police that clip-clop through town, in the vernal and autumnal excitement as the racecourse at Keeneland opens for its brief seasons and—less happily—in the social stratification between those wealthy enough to own horses and those who come here to care for them. Even those of us on the most far-flung edges of equestrian life, connected only through the occasional riding lesson, are surrounded by the beauty and mystique of horses. Take any road out of town and within minutes you are driving through the rolling green hills of horse farms, many of them world famous. They are beautiful in any season, the miles of painted wooden fences and the dark horses grazing beyond, vivid and graceful whether against the autumn hues, the snow or the lush green of summer. Surely it's no accident that races at Keeneland and at Churchill Downs in Louisville, where the Kentucky Derby is run, are held in April and early May, when central Kentucky blooms forth into spring, and the horses, so elegant and sleek, frolic amid the blush of redbuds and the frost and flame of flowering dogwood, magnolia and apple trees.

Many Lexington natives believe they live in a special place, one impossible to leave. I'm not so sure about that—or it's more accurate to say I think a more general truth exists beneath it: the place you first call home stays with you always, whether you remain or go. Even after a dozen years in Lexington, and years of travel around the world before that, my own sense of home is still rooted where I grew up: near lakes, swept with snow—a landscape imprinted on the heart. For my husband, that landscape is the subtle beauty of central Iowa.

It's always strange for me to realize that our daughters, for whom Lexington has always been home, don't share our perceptions. They think two inches of snow constitutes a blizzard, expect spring to arrive mid-March and feel a bit uneasy swimming in lakes because the water fades into darkness above a bottom they cannot see. Their days are busy with school and swim team, camping and gymnastics, one ordinary and yet totally remarkable moment leading to another. Lexington is home—it's their hometown. Writing this, I pause to wonder: What of all this will they carry with them? When they're my age, looking back through the soft edges of memory or nostalgia, what sounds and scents and images will speak to them of home?

KIM EDWARDS *is the author of* The Memory Keeper's Daughter.

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES
MOMENTOUS OR MERELY MEMORABLE

BY ALISON McLEAN

100 YEARS AGO
MAGNETIC PERSONALITY

Jack Johnson, 30, becomes the first African-American Heavyweight Champion of the World when police stop his pounding of Canadian Tommy Burns in Sydney, Australia, December 26, 1908, after 14 rounds. The flamboyant Johnson, a magnet for racist anger, successfully defends his title against former champ and "Great White Hope" James Jeffries in 1910. Johnson wins 77 of his 123 fights. He dies in 1946, age 68.

40 YEARS AGO
IN THE BEGINNING

Three days after launch, the crew of Apollo 8—astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell and William Anders—become, on December 24, 1968, the first humans to leave Earth's gravity and orbit the moon. "The moon" says Lovell, in the first close-up report, "looks like plaster of Paris or a sort of a grayish beach sand." The astronauts make six live TV broadcasts from space, including a Christmas Eve reading from the book of Genesis that reaches 100 million households. After ten orbits, they splash down December 27.

200 YEARS AGO
A FIFTH FOR BEETHOVEN

Ludwig van Beethoven conducts the première of his Symphony No. 5 in C minor in Vienna, December 22, 1808. The hall is unheated, the orchestra shaky and the concert four hours long; the work is not an instant hit. But the piece, which an increasingly deaf Beethoven had begun in 1804, gets a rave—"immeasureably noble and profound"—from E.T.A. Hoffmann in 1810 and soon becomes an orchestral standard. Its opening da-da-da DUM, four of the most famous notes in classical music, will be used for everything from symbolizing Allied victory in World War II (it is Morse code for V) to a cellphone ring tone.

40 YEARS AGO
OF MICE AND MEN

Computer engineer Douglas Engelbart gives the first public demonstration of an "X-Y position indicator for a display system" at the Fall Joint Computer Expo in San Francisco, December 9, 1968. The computer mouse, as the gadget becomes known—the original had the cord coming out the back like a tail—begins infesting the world when Apple makes it standard equipment for its Macintosh in 1984, and the verb "click" takes on a whole new meaning.

70 YEARS AGO IT'S ALIVE!

Marjorie Courtenay-Latimer, a curator at the East London Museum in South Africa, spies an unusual fish when combing trawler captain Hendrick Goosen's catch for specimens December 22, 1938. Five-feet long, 127 pounds, with fins that look like limbs, the find is determined to be a coelacanth, a fish previously known only from fossils and presumed extinct for 65 million years. Coelacanths have a hinged skull and an electrosensory organ unknown in other living fish. Now endangered, they are most often found in the Indian Ocean at depths of more than 300 feet.

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What's Killing the Aspen?

The signature tree of the Rockies is in trouble **BY MICHELLE NIJHUIS**

IT'S A RELENTLESSLY SUNNY DAY in the Rocky Mountains, and here at 9,000 feet, on the Grand Mesa in western Colorado, the aspen trees should be casting a shadow. But something is wrong in this stand: the treetops are nearly bare, their branches twisting starkly into the blue sky. Sarah Tharp, a wiry biologist for the U.S. Forest Service, hoists a small ax, takes aim and delivers an angled blow to an aspen trunk, peeling off a sample of diseased bark.

"Sometimes," she says, "I feel like a coroner."

Aspen, one of the few broad-leaved trees to grow at high altitude in Western mountains, are emblems of the Rockies. Their lean, chalky trunks are instantly recognizable on an alpine slope, their blazing-yellow fall displays part of the region's seasonal clockwork. The characteristic flutter of their heart-shaped leaves in the breeze gives them their nickname—"quakies"—and fills their stands with an unmistakable *shhhhh*.

In 2004, foresters noticed that aspen in western Colorado were falling silent. While the trees have always been susceptible to disease and insect attacks, especially in old age, "this was totally different from anything we'd seen before," says forester Wayne Shepperd. "In the past, you'd maybe see rapid die-off of one stand out of an entire landscape—it wasn't really a big deal. But now, we're seeing whole portions of the landscape go."

By 2006, close to 150,000 acres of Colorado aspen were dead or damaged, according to aerial surveys. By the following year, the grim phenomenon had a name—"sudden aspen decline," or SAD—and the devastated acreage had more than doubled, with some 13 percent of the state's aspen showing declines. In many places, patches of bare and dying treetops are as noticeable as missing teeth, and some sickly areas stretch for miles. Aspen declines are also underway in Wyoming, Utah and elsewhere in the Rockies. Surveys of two national forests in Arizona showed that from 2000 to 2007, lower-elevation areas lost 90 percent of their aspen.

Aspen grow in "clones," or groups of genetically identical trunks. Some clones are thousands of years old, although individual trees live 150

Researchers (above: Angel Watkins and coworkers in Colorado) blame many culprits (left: aspen bark bears traces of burrowing beetles).

JT THOMAS (2)

years at most. One especially large stand in Utah, known as "Pando" after the Latin for "I spread," was recently confirmed by geneticists to cover 108 acres. It is variously said to be the world's heaviest, largest or oldest organism. Disturbances such as wildfires or disease usually prompt clones to send up a slew of fresh sprouts, but new growth is rare in SAD-affected stands.

Tharp and three other young Forest Service biologists—under the genial supervision of veteran plant pathologist Jim Worrall—are chasing down the causes of the decline. They walk among the aspen trunks and divvy up their tasks for the day.

"You want me to dig? Is that where this is heading?" Worrall teases the crew members, who are outfitted in hard hats and orange vests and sport the occasional nose piercing.

A tiny mark on the bark of one trunk prompts Angel Watkins to probe underneath with a knife, where she finds the wood is decorated by the convoluted track of a bronze poplar borer larva. While the inch-long larvae don't usually kill aspen outright, their trails can weaken the trees and open new portals to fungal infections, which in turn form oozing bruises under the bark. On another tree, Worrall finds small cracks like those on the surface of a cookie, a clue that tunneling underneath has dried out the bark. Closer inspection turns up a bark beetle, no more than one-twelfth-inch long but capable, en masse, of cutting off the tree's nutrient supply.

"These beetles are the biggest mystery," says Worrall. Before SAD, aspen bark beetles were known to science, but "most entomologists who worked on aspen had never heard of them," he says. His crew now finds bark beetles in almost every damaged stand. They've also observed that some fungi, borers and other insects and diseases are proliferating.

The most extensive SAD is in the hottest and driest areas—low-lying, south-facing slopes. The pattern suggests that the region's extreme drought and high temperatures—both possible symptoms of global warming—have weakened the trees, allowing more disease and insect attacks.

It seems that new stems aren't growing back after trees die because drought and heat have stressed the trees. During drought, aspen close off microscopic openings in their leaves, a survival measure that slows water loss but also slows the uptake of carbon dioxide, required for photosynthesis. As a result, the trees can't convert as much sunlight into sugar. Worrall speculates that the trees absorb stored energy from their own roots, eventually killing the roots and preventing the rise of new aspen sprouts. "They basically starve to death," he says.

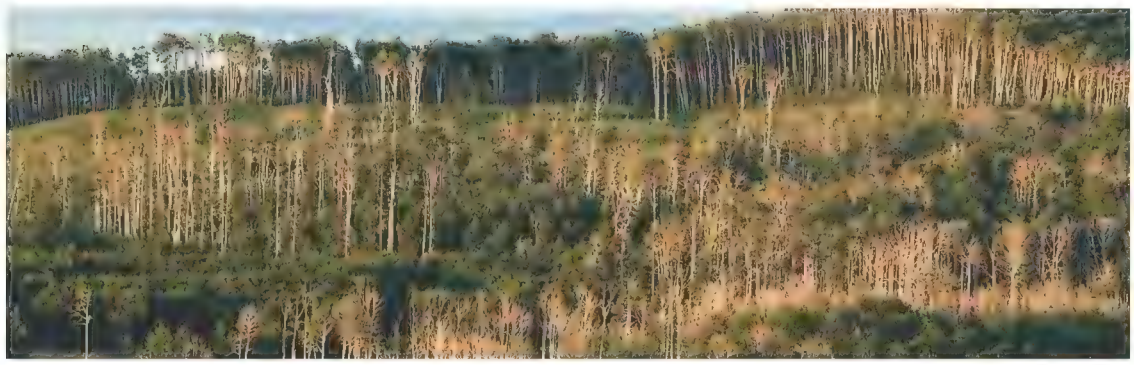
The drought here has lasted nearly a decade, and climate scientists predict that severe droughts will strike even more often in parts of the West as greenhouse-gas levels continue to rise and contribute to global warming. "If we have more hot, dry periods as predicted, SAD will continue," says Worrall. Aspen at lower elevations will likely disappear, he says, and those at higher elevations will be weaker and sparser.

Aspen aren't the only trees in trouble in the Rockies. The needles of many spruce and pine trees in Colorado are tinged with red, a sign of bark beetle infestation. The outbreak began in 1996 and today 1.5 million acres are infected. Foresters recently projected that the state will lose most of its mature lodgepole pines to beetles within the next five years. Whitebark pines, whose fatty seeds provide meals for grizzly bears in the northern Rockies, have long been protected from insect attack because they thrive in high-mountain habitat, but invading beetles have now knocked out most of the mature trees. Biologists say several types of bark beetles are reproducing more quickly and expanding their range, thanks to warming trends that allow the insects to survive winters at higher elevations and more northern latitudes.

"We're seeing major ecological responses to warming," says Thomas Veblen, an ecologist at the University of Colorado at Boulder and a longtime student of Rocky Mountain forests. "That's the common theme that's hitting everybody in the face."

While Worrall and his crew of biologists investigate the damage done by SAD, the Forest Service is testing treatments for the decline. In some places, researchers find, logging and controlled burns encourage aspen stands to generate new trees. In northern Arizona, where the Coconino National Forest has fenced off several hundred acres of aspen, foresters hope the barriers will protect new growth from hungry elk and deer. But no one has found a cure.

In the fall, aspen's golden foliage creates a stunning contrast with the surrounding evergreens. These dramatic panoramas appear to be threatened. Future visitors to the Rockies are likely to find an altered forest, if, as experts foresee, aspen cede territory to evergreens or open meadows. Not that a forest is ever a static thing. "The forest of our grandparents' time wasn't the best of all possible forests, ours isn't the best of all possible forests, and the forest of the future won't be, either," says Dan Binkley of the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute at Colorado State University. Still, aspen's grandeur would be sorely missed.



Dead or dying aspen (Colorado in 2008) are changing the landscape of the West.

JT THOMAS

MICHELLE NIJHUIS *wrote about Walden Pond in the October 2007 issue of* SMITHSONIAN.

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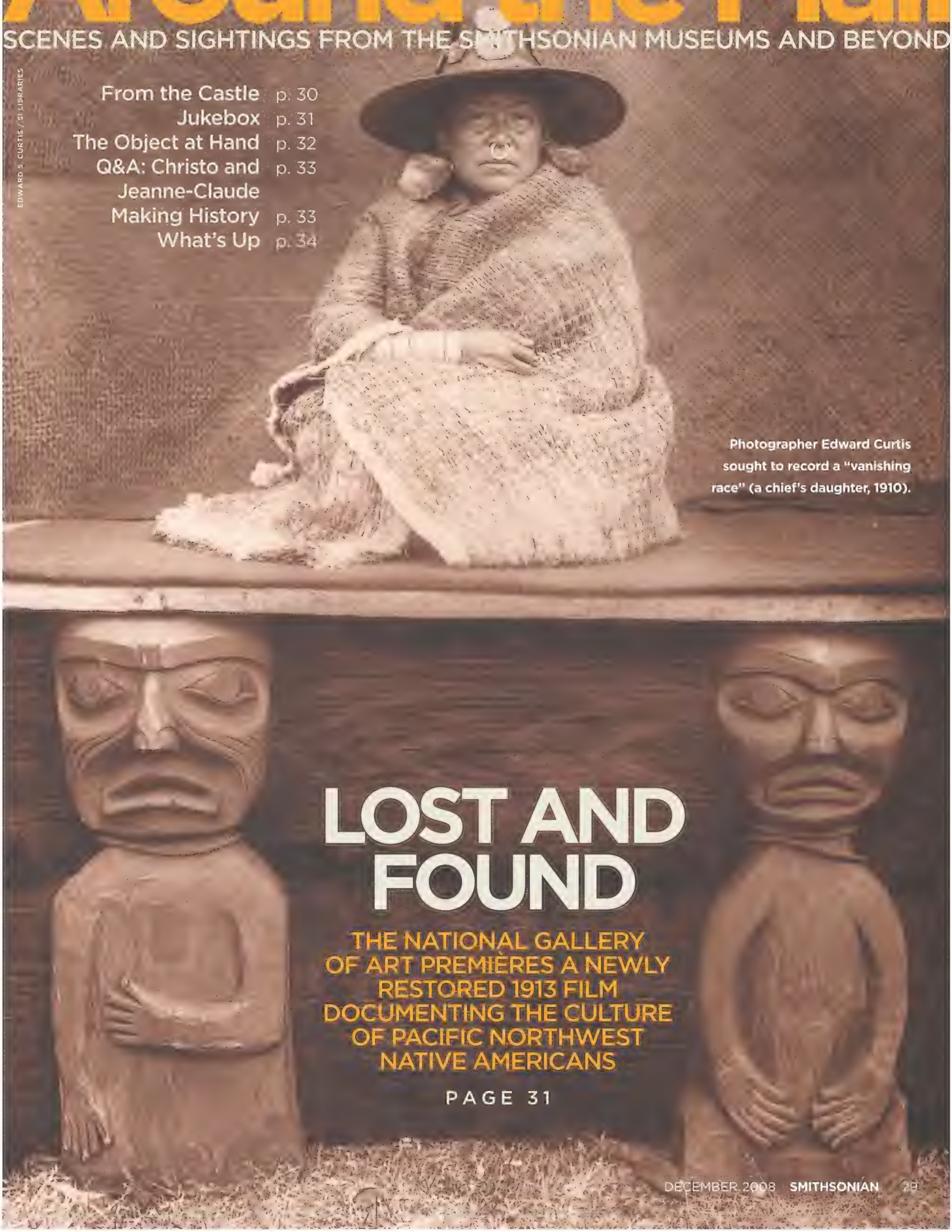

Photographer Edward Curtis sought to record a "vanishing race" (a chief's daughter, 1910).

LOST AND FOUND

THE NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART PREMIÈRES A NEWLY RESTORED 1913 FILM DOCUMENTING THE CULTURE OF PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIVE AMERICANS

PAGE 31

FROM THE CASTLE

Channel Too

G. WAYNE CLOUGH

THE VIETNAM VETERANS MEMORIAL here in Washington, with 58,260 names carved in black granite and personal mementos left by families and friends, is deeply moving. As is the documentary "Remembering Vietnam: The Wall at 25." You can watch this film and almost a hundred others on the Smithsonian Channel, now reaching millions of households through participating cable and satellite companies. I have especially enjoyed "America's Hangar," which features our large aircraft at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center; "Sound Revolution: The Electric Guitar," a story of invention and musical history showing a rich collection of instruments; a "Stories From the Vaults" episode at the Smithsonian Archives of American Art revealing Frida Kahlo's love letters; "The Batwomen of Panama," with ecologist Elisabeth Kalko unlocking mysteries of nighttime bat behavior at the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute; and "Picturing the Presidents," a walk through history at our National Portrait Gallery.

"The Batwomen of Panama," one of nearly a hundred films now showing on the Smithsonian Channel, unlocks the mysteries of bat behavior.

The Smithsonian Channel was launched in October 2007 with a 24-hour schedule—a large presence we expect will grow with the addition of new distributors and outlets, including PDAs and cellphones. The Channel has already received 31 awards and nominations for artistic quality, including an Emmy Award for Best Cinematography (for "The Magic of Motion," an episode in the "Nature Tech" series), five Parents' Choice Awards and five CINE Golden Eagle Awards.

While off to a good start, the Smithsonian Channel is a newcomer in a field of well-established and high-quality competitors. Our special niche relates to the strength of the Smithsonian Institution (SI), the world's largest museum and research complex, with expertise across science, art, history and culture, and a collection of 137 million objects.

The Smithsonian Channel is not our first television venture. Since the late 1950s, we have produced hundreds of hours of exhibition, TV and home video programs. Now, technology has enabled us to create 100 hours of programming in just under two years, including new SI-focused documentaries and other films relevant to the Institution's work. Future programs will help viewers experience aspects of the Smithsonian they would normally never see, such as our work with endangered species at the National Zoo's Conservation and Research Center in Virginia. With almost 100 million American households and many more around the globe watching cable television, the Smithsonian Channel is a key part of our outreach. If you haven't already enjoyed its offerings, I hope you will soon. For previews, go to Smithsonian.com and click on Smithsonian Channel.

G. WAYNE CLOUGH *is Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution.*

Smithsonian Institution

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SMITHSONIAN CHANNEL

THE WORLD FILM CORPORATION PRESENTS
IN THE LAND OF
THE HEAD HUNTERS
EDWARD S. CURTIS'
INDIAN EPIC DRAMA OF THE NORTHERN SEA
WITH NATIVE MUSIC SYMPHONIZED

Despite receiving critical acclaim, the Curtis film (left: a 1914 billboard advertisement) was a box office failure.

THE PAST IS PROLOGUE

HOW A FILM HELPED PRESERVE A NATIVE CULTURE

SEATTLE-BASED PHOTOGRAPHER Edward Curtis had a singular passion. Beginning in the 1890s, he set out to document what he and most of his contemporaries believed was a "vanishing race"—that of the American Indian.

For 30 years, Curtis traveled across North America taking thousands of pictures of native people, often staging them in "primitive" situations. "There were many groups of what were considered exotic people living in North America, and he wanted to romantically and artistically render them as they existed in a traditional past," says Joanna Cohan Scherer, an anthropologist at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History and author of a new book of Curtis photographs. "Without question he is the most famous photographer of Native Americans from this period."

To raise money for his project, Curtis turned to Hollywood—sort of. In 1913, he traveled to the west coast of Canada to make a movie. Using members of Vancouver Island's Kwakwaka'wakw tribe (also known as the Kwakiutl) as actors and extras, Curtis documented local traditions and dances. "Pictures should be made to illustrate the period before the white man came," he wrote in 1912 to Charles Doolittle Walcott, Secretary of the Smithsonian, one of the project's sponsors. On the set, he paid Kwakwaka'wakw craftsmen to build traditional masks and costumes and even had the actors—most of whom had cut their hair European-style—wear long wigs. The film, titled *In the Land of the Head Hunters,* debuted in New York and Seattle in 1914 to critical success. But it was a box office failure. Audiences expected tepees and horses—not the elaborate, stylized dances and complex ceremonial masks of the Kwakwaka'wakw. "Because they weren't stereotypical Indians, people didn't know what to think of it," says Aaron Glass, an anthropologist at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Recently, Glass and collaborator Brad Evans, an English professor at Rutgers University, set out to resurrect Curtis' film. A damaged partial print surfaced in the 1970s, but it was missing key scenes. In a half-dozen archives from Los Angeles to Indiana, the pair found film reels not seen since 1915 and discovered the film's original orchestral score (filed incorrectly in a drawer at the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles). Last month, the restored film was screened at Washington, D.C.'s National Gallery of Art. An orchestra of Native American musicians, co-sponsored by the National Museum of the American Indian, performed the original score.

The culture that Curtis had thought was about to disappear still thrives, preserved by the descendants of people who acted in his film almost a century ago. Many of the ceremonies that Curtis used for dramatic effect—including bits of the symbolic and highly sensationalized "Cannibal Dance" —are still performed today. Curtis' film played a vital role in that preservation. Kwakwaka'wakw cultural groups had used fragments of the movie as a sort of visual primer on how their great-great-grandparents did everything from dancing to paddling huge war canoes. "We have a group of dance performers who are all related to the original cast in one way or another," says Andrea Sanborn, director of the tribe's U'mista Cultural Centre in Alert Bay, British Columbia. "The culture is very much alive, and getting stronger." ANDREW CURRY

BILL UTLEY COLLECTION; SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS RECORDINGS

JUKEBOX

HOLIDAY SPIRIT

For 50 years, Ella Jenkins—once dubbed the "first lady of the children's folk song" by an admiring critic—has brought a unique touch to music, composing bedtime ballads inspired by spoken-word poetry and African folk tunes. In 2004, the Grammys paid tribute to Jenkins' genre-bending compositions with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Her *Holiday Times* album, recorded in 1996, features music for festivals including Kwanzaa and Hanukkah, as well as variations on traditional Christmas favorites such as "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." Go to Smithsonian.com/jukebox to catch some of Jenkins' holiday spirit. ANIKA GUPTA

Plan your visit to the Smithsonian at goSmithsonian.com

THE OBJECT AT HAND | Gettysburg Address

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

BEYOND WORDS

Lincoln's timeless tribute endures as literature

BY OWEN EDWARDS

The only known image of Abraham Lincoln (left: hatless) at Gettysburg was uncovered in 1952 at the National Archives. It was taken by photographer Mathew Brady.

IN AMERICAN HISTORY, November 19, 1863, might be considered a day of wind and fire.

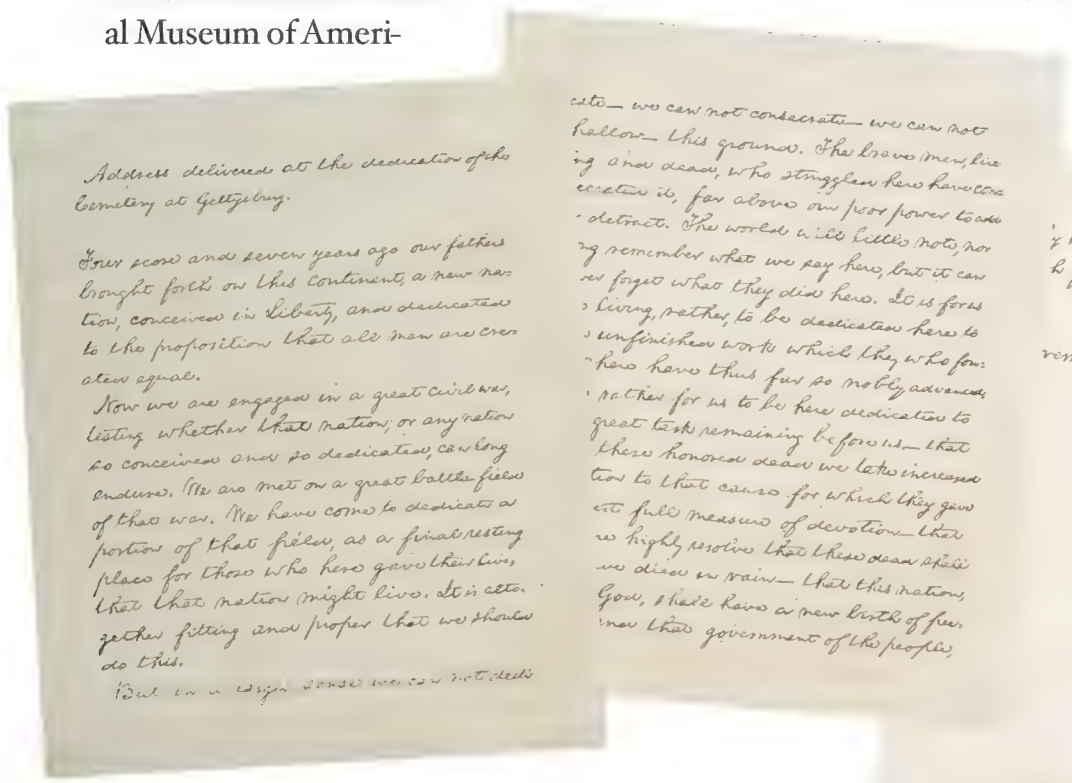
The place was the Gettysburg battlefield, four and a half months after the bloody and pivotal victory of the Union's Army of the Potomac over Gen. Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. The event was the dedication of a cemetery for those who had died on those rolling fields. The wind was a two-hour speech by Edward Everett, a renowned orator and former senator from Massachusetts. And the fire was a dedication by President Abraham Lincoln that followed, a speech hardly more than two minutes in length. Like an ember left over from the conflagration of battle, it has warmed the nation's collective memory ever since.

Lincoln's Gettysburg Address represents perhaps the perfect combination of eloquence, elegance and economy in our history, shining rhetorical proof of the design axiom, "Less is more." Given the florid oratorical standards of the time, Lincoln's brevity could hardly have been expected. Yet a more reverberant effect cannot be imagined. Harry Rubenstein, chair of the division of politics and reform at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History (NMAH), sums up the occasion nicely: "Everybody says the same thing about the ceremony: Lincoln gave a great speech and Everett spoke for two hours."

A copy of that speech, in Lincoln's handwriting—the version generally regarded as the definitive text—is now on loan from the White House, displayed in the new Albert H. Small Documents Gallery at the reopened NMAH. It will be on view through January 4.

American schoolchildren have learned its cadences by heart for decades; many of us, young and nervous, recited it at patriotic ceremonies as our parents, proud and nervous, looked on. But the venerated address was not universally admired at the time. Eyewitnesses reported that there was silence when Lincoln finished, followed by sparse applause, once described by the late historian Shelby Foote as "barely polite."

It's possible that so soon after it began, hardly anyone realized that the speech had ended. Nor was the elegiac tone so appropriate to the occasion calculated to elicit the applause lines that presidential speechwriters seek today. It may seem surprising, too, that Everett, not the president, was the main speaker of the day. According to Rubenstein, the orator's top billing "made sense at the time. You're not going to ask a president in the


Address delivered at the dedication of the
Cemetery at Gettysburg.
Four score and seven years ago our fathers
brought forth on this continent, a new na-
tion, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated
to the proposition that all men are cre-
ated equal.
Now we are engaged in a great civil war,
testing whether that nation, or any nation
so conceived and so dedicated, can long
endure. We are met on a great battle-field
of that war. We have come to dedicate a
portion of that field, as a final resting
place for those who here gave their lives
that that nation might live. It is alto-
gether fitting and proper that we should
do this.
But in a larger sense we can not dedi-
cate— we can not consecrate— we can not
hallow— this ground. The brave men, liv-
ing and dead, who struggled here have conse-
crated it, far above our poor power to add
or detract. The world will little note, nor
long remember what we say here, but it can
never forget what they did here. It is for us
the living, rather, to be dedicated here to
the unfinished work which they who fought
here have thus far so nobly advanced.
It is rather for us to be here dedicated to
the great task remaining before us— that
from these honored dead we take increased
devotion to that cause for which they gave
the last full measure of devotion— that
we here highly resolve that these dead shall
not have died in vain— that this nation,
under God, shall have a new birth of free-
dom— and that government of the people,
by the people, for the people, shall not per-
ish from the earth.
Abraham Lincoln.
November 19. 1863.

After Lincoln delivered the speech (a copy in his handwriting), the *New York Times* described the occasion as "solemn and imposing."

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; WHITE HOUSE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION (3)

middle of a major war to take the time to write a big speech."

The *Chicago Times*, no friend of Lincoln's, described the address as "silly, flat and dishwatery utterances," while the *New York Times*, strongly Republican at the time, praised it. The president himself is said to have harbored doubts about the speech. Everett was gracious. "I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes," he wrote to Lincoln the day after the ceremony. Rubenstein says it's possible that Everett was merely being polite, "but there's no way to know."

Lincoln later sent his fellow speaker a copy of the speech when Everett was assembling a book listing events at the battlefield dedication, to be sold for the benefit of wounded Union soldiers. The president wrote out by hand five copies of the address, two before the ceremony—historians aren't sure which of these is the copy from which Lincoln read at Gettysburg—and three afterward.

Lincoln's last handwritten copy, the only one signed by the president, was penned in March 1864, to be reproduced for a publication entitled *Autograph Leaves of Our Country's Authors*, which was also intended to raise money for the Union cause. One of the book's publishers, Alexander Bliss, kept the original document; it's the one now on display at the NMAH.

This copy remained in the hands of the Bliss family until Oscar Cintas, Cuba's ambassador to the United States in the 1930s, bought it at auction in 1949 for $54,000 (roughly the cost of a substantial New York suburban house at the time). Cintas, who died in 1957, had willed the copy to the United States. It is usually displayed in the Lincoln bedroom of the White House. The brief dedication made at Gettysburg, says Rubenstein, endures as nothing less than "a remarkable piece of literature."

OWEN EDWARDS *is a freelance writer and author of the book* Elegant Solutions.

Q&A

In 1976, installation artists **CHRISTO AND JEANNE-CLAUDE** built *Running Fence*, a 24.5-mile fabric divide that sliced through Northern California's Sonoma and Marin counties. They spoke with Anika Gupta about a forthcoming Smithsonian exhibit on the project.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA AS THE SITE FOR *RUNNING FENCE*? CHRISTO: The moisture [in Marin County] creates this lovely light and beautiful fog. In the morning, the mist rolls forward from the ocean and the fence becomes invisible, part of the mist. Then the mist rolls back. So throughout the day the fence is constantly appearing and disappearing.

***RUNNING FENCE* STRETCHED ACROSS PRIVATE LAND, MOST OF WHICH BELONGED TO 59 RANCHERS. HOW DID YOU GET THEM TO AGREE TO LET YOU USE THEIR LAND?** JEANNE-CLAUDE: I was standing in this one kitchen and the rancher kept saying to me, "The fence has no purpose." So I told him, "A work of art needs no purpose, it is beautiful." But he was not totally convinced. Then, as he led me to the door, I saw these little green leaves by his front stoop. "What did you plant here, lettuce or radishes?" I asked. "Those are flowers," he explained. "But you cannot eat flowers!" I responded. And he said, "Honey, I got the message."

WHAT WAS YOUR REACTION WHEN THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM PURCHASED THE *RUNNING FENCE* DOCUMENTARY AND RELATED PHOTOS AND DRAWINGS? CHRISTO: We were very excited, of course. We were eager that the project stay in the United States, and that it remain a complete story.

Visit Smithsonian.com/christojeanne-claude for more conversation with the artists

MAKING HISTORY

STARDUST MEMORIES Space enthusiasts can now get an up-close look at the latest extraterrestrial explorer. In 2006, NASA's *Stardust* capsule returned from a seven-year, three-billion-mile trip to collect dust from comet Wild 2—the first mission to bring home a piece of the solar system from someplace other than the moon. Measuring just 32 inches in diameter—not much bigger than a standard car tire—*Stardust* was fitted with a special arm topped with squishy gel patches to collect comet particles without damaging them. "Like bugs on a windshield, except the [bugs] didn't get crushed," is how Air and Space Museum senior curator Roger Launius described the delicate collection process. NASA scientists will sift the comet dust for clues about the elemental makeup of the outer solar system. The stellar dust might even reveal how the composition of stars has changed over time, leading to insights into the origin of the universe. The capsule went on permanent display at the museum's "Milestones of Flight" exhibit on September 24. **ANIKA GUPTA**

WOLFGANG VOLZ / LAIF / REDUX; JPL-CALTECH / NASA

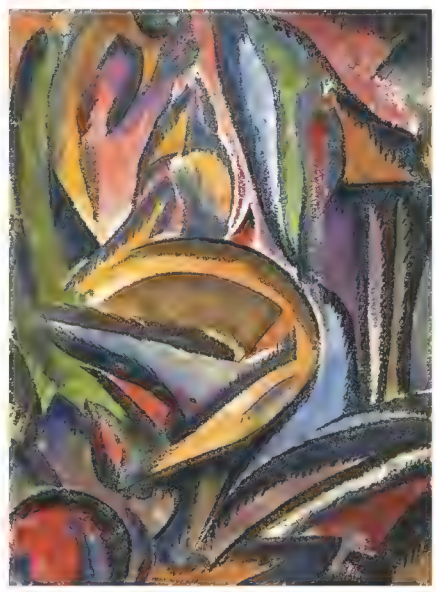
What's Up

AFRICAN ALCHEMY

North African artisans combined gold and silver to forge jewelry like the *khamsa* (19th or 20th century), meant to protect wearers from the evil eye. See the good omens at the Museum of African Art until January 11.

FACE TIME

Abraham Lincoln's political career spanned three decades. Witness his transformation from young congressman to beleaguered president in a series of rare images at the National Portrait Gallery through July 5, 2009.

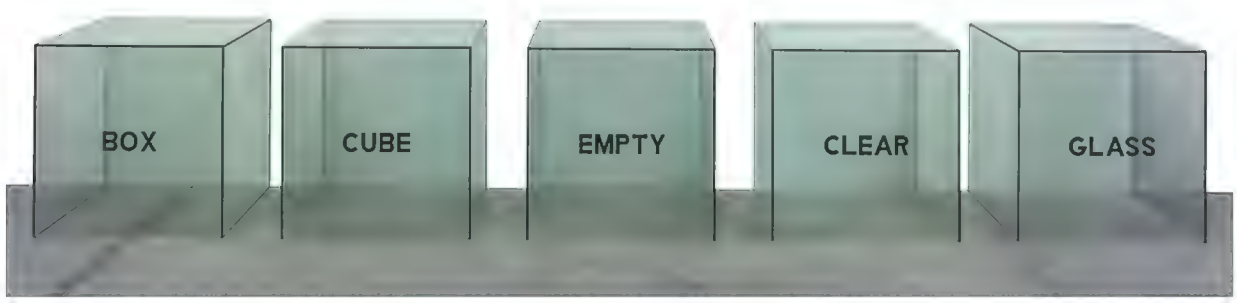


GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

John J. Audubon's naturalism, Georgia O'Keeffe's sensuality and Man Ray's surrealism (*Landscape,* 1913) are among the styles on display in an exhibit of graphic masters of 19th- and 20th-century art, opening November 27 at the American Art Museum.

YOU'VE GOT V-MAIL

In 1941, forced to choose between transporting letters and moving war cargo, the U.S. Army invented Victory Mail—letters converted into microfilm. Artifacts commemorating this text-messaging marvel (a magazine ad) are at the Postal Museum through 2010.



PROFESSIONAL BOXING

Count Giuseppe Panza was known for buying artwork too conceptual for most museums. Fifty years later, the Hirshhorn showcases some of the now-celebrated works in Panza's collection (a piece by Joseph Kosuth) through January 11.

BY ANIKA GUPTA

VISIT THE SMITHSONIAN For a free Associates' planning packet, call 202 633-1000 or 202 357-1729 (TTY), 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday. Or send an e-mail to info@si.edu. The Smithsonian Information Center in the Castle is open daily, 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Members can visit the reception desk between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. to register for a behind-the-scenes tour and to hear about membership benefits. Most museums are open daily, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. All museums are closed December 25.

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN ART, SI; SAAM; NATIONAL POSTAL MUSEUM, SI; MATHEW B. BRADY / NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SI; PANZA COLLECTION / HIRSHHORN MUSEUM, SI

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FAITH & ECSTASY

Pakistan's violent extremists may get most of the attention, but the nation's peaceful, life-affirming Sufis have numbers—and history—on their side

BY NICHOLAS SCHMIDLE

Photographs by Aaron Huey

Sufism embraces a personal, experiential approach to Allah. At a festival honoring the saint Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, celebrants engage in the dancing known as *dhamaal*, intended to purge evil spirits known as *djinns*.

In the desert swelter of southern Pakistan, the scent of rosewater mixed with a waft of hashish smoke. Drummers pounded away as celebrants swathed in red pushed a camel bedecked with garlands, tinsel and multihued scarfs through the heaving crowd. A man skirted past, grinning and dancing, his face glistening like the golden dome of a shrine nearby. "Mast Qalandar!" he cried. "The ecstasy of Qalandar!"

The camel reached a courtyard packed with hundreds of men jumping in place with their hands in the air, chanting "Qalandar!" for the saint buried inside the shrine. The men threw rose petals at a dozen women who danced in what seemed like a mosh pit near the shrine's entrance. Enraptured, one woman placed her hands on her knees and threw her head back and forth; another bounced and jiggled as if she were astride a trotting horse. The drumming and dancing never stopped, not even for the call to prayer.

I stood at the edge of the courtyard and asked a young man named Abbas to explain this dancing, called *dhamaal*. Though dancing is central to the Islamic tradition known as Sufism, dhamaal is particular to some South Asian Sufis. "When a *djinn* infects a human body," Abbas said, referring to one of the spirits that populate Islamic belief (and known in the West as "genies"), "the only way we can get rid of it is by coming here to do dhamaal." A woman stumbled toward us with her eyes closed and passed out at our feet. Abbas didn't seem to notice, so I pretended not to either.

"What goes through your head when you are doing dhamaal?" I asked.

"Nothing. I don't think," he said. A few women rushed in our direction, emptied a water bottle on the semiconscious woman's face and slapped her cheeks. She shot upright and danced back into the crowd. Abbas smiled. "During dhamaal, I just feel the blessings of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar wash over me."

Every year, a few hundred thousand Sufis converge in Sehwan, a town in Pakistan's southeastern Sindh province, for a three-day festival marking the death of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, in 1274. Qalandar, as he is almost universally called, belonged to a cast of mystics who consolidated Islam's hold on this region; today, Pakistan's two most populous provinces, Sindh and Punjab, comprise a dense archipelago of shrines devoted to these men. Sufis travel from one shrine to another for festivals known as *urs*, an Arabic word for "marriage," symbolizing the union between Sufis and the divine.

Sufism is not a sect, like Shiism or Sunnism, but rather the mystical side of Islam—a personal, experiential approach to Allah, which contrasts with the prescriptive, doctrinal approach of fundamentalists like the Taliban. It exists throughout the Muslim world (perhaps most visibly in Turkey, where whirling dervishes represent a strain of Sufism), and its millions of followers generally embrace Islam as a religious experience, not a social or political one. Sufis represent the strongest indigenous force against Islamic fundamentalism. Yet Western countries have tended to underestimate their importance even as the West has spent, since 2001, millions of dollars on interfaith dialogues, public diplomacy campaigns and other initiatives to counter extremism. Sufis are particularly significant in Pakistan, where Taliban-inspired gangs threaten the prevailing social, political and religious order.

Pakistan's Sindh and Punjab provinces are dotted with shrines to Sufi saints, who are celebrated in an almost unending series of festivals. At a shrine in the town of Bhit (above), one pilgrim sings religious poetry (left) and another studies (right). In Multan (below), the "city of saints," devotees approach a shrine for evening prayer.

Pakistan, carved out of India in 1947, was the first modern nation founded on the basis of religious identity. Questions about that identity have provoked dissent and violence ever since. Was Pakistan to be a state for Muslims, governed by civilian institutions and secular laws? Or an Islamic state, governed by clerics according to *sharia*, or Islamic law? Sufis, with their ecumenical beliefs, typically favor the former, while the Taliban, in their fight to establish an extreme orthodoxy, seek the latter. The Taliban have antiaircraft weapons, rocket-propelled grenades and squads of suicide bombers. But the Sufis have drums. And history.

I asked Carl Ernst, an author of several books about Sufism and a professor of Islamic studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, whether he thought Pakistan's Sufis could survive the wave of militant Islam sweep-

ing east from the region along the Afghanistan border. "Sufism has been a part of the fabric of life in the Pakistan region for centuries, while the Taliban are a very recent phenomenon without much depth," he replied in an e-mail. "I would bet on the Sufis in the long run." This summer, the Taliban attracted a few hundred people to witness beheadings in Pakistan's tribal areas. In August, more than 300,000 Sufis showed up to honor Lal Shahbaz Qalandar.

Qalandar was an ascetic; he dressed in rags and tied a rock around his neck so that he was constantly bowing before Allah. His given name was Usman Marwandi; "Qalandar" was used by his followers as an honorific indicating his superior standing in the hierarchy of saints. He moved from a suburb of Tabriz, in modern-day Iran, to Sindh in the early 13th century. The remainder of his biography remains murky. The meaning of *lal*, or "red," in his name? Some say he had auburn hair, others believe he wore a red robe and still others say he once was scalded while meditating over a pot of boiling water.

In migrating to Sindh, Qalandar joined other mystics fleeing Central Asia as the Mongols advanced. Many of them

The "four friends" eschewed fire-and-brimstone sermons and incorporated local traditions into Sufi practices.

settled temporarily in Multan, a city in central Punjab that came to be known as the "city of saints." Arab armies had conquered Sindh in 711, a hundred years after the founding of Islam, but they had paid more attention to empire-building than to religious conversions. Qalandar teamed with three other itinerant preachers to promote Islam amid a population of Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus.

The "four friends," as they became known, taught Sufism. They eschewed fire-and-brimstone sermons, and rather than forcibly convert those belonging to other religions, they often incorporated local traditions into their own practices. "The Sufis did not preach Islam like the mullah preaches it today," says Hamid Akhund, a former secretary of tourism and culture in the Sindh government. Qalandar "played the role of integrator," says Ghulam Rabbani Agro, a Sindhi historian who has written a book about Qalandar. "He wanted to take the sting out of religion."

Gradually, as the "friends" and other saints died, their enshrined tombs attracted legions of followers. Sufis believed that their descendants, referred to as *pirs*, or "spiritual guides," inherited some of the saints' charisma and special access to Allah. Orthodox clerics, or mullahs, considered such beliefs heretical, a denial of Islam's basic creed: "There is no God but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet." While pirs encouraged their

followers to engage Allah in a mystical sense and relish the beauty of the Koran's poetic aspects, the mullahs typically instructed their followers to memorize the Koran and study accounts of the Prophet's life, known collectively as the Hadith.

While the tension between Sufis and other Muslims continued through history, in Pakistan the dynamic between the two groups has lately entered an especially intense phase with the proliferation of militant groups. In one example three years ago, terrorists attacked an urs in Islamabad, killing more than two dozen people. After October 2007, when former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto—a native of Sindh province with roots in Sufism—returned from exile, terrorists twice targeted her for assassination, succeeding that December. Meanwhile, the Taliban persisted in their terror campaign against the Pakistani military and launched attacks in major cities.

I had seen the extremists up close; in the fall of 2007 I traveled throughout northwestern Pakistan for three months, reporting a story on the emergence of a new, considerably more dangerous generation of Taliban. In January 2008, two days after that story was published in the *New York Times Magazine*, I was expelled from Pakistan for traveling without government authorization to areas where the Taliban held sway. The next month, Bhutto's political party swept to victory in national elections, heralding the twilight of President Pervez Musharraf's military rule. It was an odd parallel: the return of democracy and the rise of the Taliban. In August, I secured another visa from the Pakistani government and went back to see how the Sufis were faring.

The Bhuttos were adept at marshaling Sufi support, not least because they considered Qalandar their patron saint.

Over dinner in a Karachi hotel, Rohail Hyatt told me that the "modern-day mullah" was an "urban myth" and that such authoritarian clerics have "always been at war with Sufis." Hyatt, a Sufi, is also one of Pakistan's pop icons. Vital Signs, which he founded in 1986, became the country's biggest rock band in the late '80s. In 2002, the BBC named the band's 1987 hit, "Dil, Dil Pakistan" ("Heart, Heart Pakistan"), the third most popular international song of all time. But Vital Signs became inactive in 1997, and lead singer Junaid Jamshed, Hyatt's longtime friend, became a fundamentalist and decided that such music was un-Islamic.

Hyatt watched with despair as his friend adopted the rituals, doctrine and uncompromising approach espoused by the urban mullahs, who, in Hyatt's view, "believe that our identity is set by the Prophet" and less by Allah, and thus mistakenly gauge a man's commitment to Islam by such outward signs as the length of his beard, the cut of his trousers (the Prophet wore his above the ankle, for comfort in the desert) and the size of the bruise on his forehead (from regular, intense prayer). "These mullahs play to people's fears," Hyatt said. " 'Here is heaven, here is hell. I can get you into heaven. Just do as I say.' "

Sindh province has long provided both a home and political base to the Bhuttos (clockwise from near right): Benazir Bhutto (in 2007 with a portrait of her and her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto); her widower, President Asif Ali Zardari; and their son, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who has been selected to lead the Pakistan Peoples Party after finishing college.

I hadn't been able to find a clear, succinct definition of Sufism anywhere, so I asked Hyatt for one. "I can explain to you what love is until I turn blue in the face. I can take two weeks to explain everything to you," he said. "But there is no way I can make you feel it until you feel it. Sufism initiates that emotion in you. And through that process, religious experience becomes totally different: pure and absolutely nonviolent."

Hyatt is now the music director for Coca-Cola in Pakistan, and he hopes he can leverage some of his cultural influence—and access to corporate cash—to convey Sufism's message of moderation and inclusiveness to urban audiences. (He used to

NICHOLAS SCHMIDLE *is a fellow at the New America Foundation in Washington, D.C.* **AARON HUEY** *is based in Seattle. He has been photographing Sufi life in Pakistan since 2006.*

LEFT: FAREED KHAN / AP IMAGES; LOWER RIGHT: KIRSTY WIGGLESWORTH / AP IMAGES

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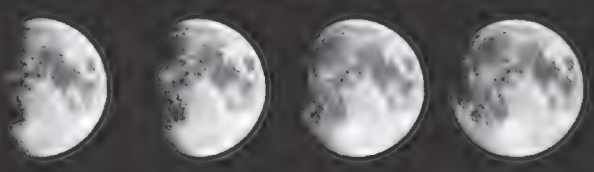

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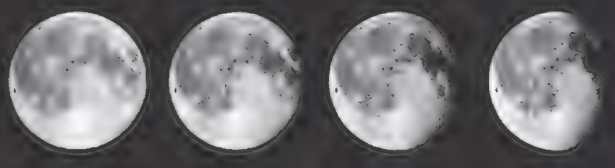

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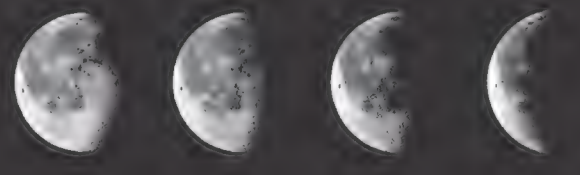

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work for Pepsi, he said, but Coke is "way more Sufic.") He recently produced a series of live studio performances that paired rock acts with traditional singers of *qawwali*, devotional Sufi music from South Asia. One of the best-known qawwali songs is titled "Dama Dum Mast Qalandar," or "Every Breath for the Ecstasy of Qalandar."

Several politicians have also tried to popularize Sufism, with varying degrees of success. In 2006, as Musharraf faced political and military challenges from the resurgent Taliban, he established a National Sufi Council to promote Sufi poetry and music. "The Sufis always worked for the promotion of love and oneness of humanity, not for disunity or hatred," he said at the time. But Musharraf's venture was perceived as less than sincere.

"The generals hoped that since Sufism and devotion to shrines is a common factor of rural life, they would exploit it," Hamid Akhund told me. "They couldn't." Akhund chuckled at the thought of a centralized, military government trying to harness a decentralized phenomenon like Sufism. The Sufi Council is no longer active.

The Bhuttos—most prominently, Benazir and her father, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto—were much better at marshaling Sufi support, not least because their hometown lies in Sindh province and they have considered Lal Shahbaz Qalandar their patron saint. Qalandar's resting place became, in the judgment of University of Amsterdam scholar Oskar Verkaaik, "the geographical center of [the elder] Bhutto's political spirituality."

After founding the Pakistan Peoples Party, Bhutto was elected president in 1971 and prime minister in 1973. (He was ousted in a coup in 1977 and hanged two years later.)

As Benazir Bhutto began her first campaign for prime minister, in the mid-1980s, her followers would greet her with the chant, "Benazir Bhutto Mast Qalandar" ("Benazir Bhutto, the ecstasy of Qalandar"). In late 2007, when she returned to Pakistan from an exile imposed by Musharraf, she received a heroine's welcome, especially in Sindh.

In Jamshoro, a town almost three hours north of Karachi, I met a Sindhi poet named Anwar Sagar. His office had been torched during the riots that followed Benazir Bhutto's assassination. More than six months later, smashed windowpanes were still unrepaired and soot covered the walls. "All the Bhuttos possess the spirit of Qalandar," Sagar told me. "The message of Qalandar was the belief in love and God." From his briefcase he pulled out a poem he had written just

In Sufism, "religious experience becomes totally different: pure and absolutely nonviolent," says pop-music icon Rohail Hyatt (below). Now music director for Coca-Cola in Pakistan, he hopes to use his cultural influence to spread Sufism's moderate message in the cities.

MAP: GUILBERT GATES

after Bhutto was killed. He translated the final lines:

She rose above the Himalayas,
Immortal she became,
The devotee of Qalandar became Qalandar herself.

"So who is next in line?" I asked. "Are all Bhuttos destined to inherit Qalandar's spirit?"

"This is just the beginning for Asif," Sagar said, referring to Asif Ali Zardari, Benazir Bhutto's widower, who was elected president of Pakistan this past September. "So he hasn't attained the level of Qalandar yet. But I have great hope in Bilawal"—Bhutto and Zardari's 20-year-old son, who has been selected to lead the Pakistan Peoples Party after he finishes his studies at Oxford University in England—"that he can become another Qalandar."

Musharraf, a general who had seized power in a 1999 coup, resigned from office a week into my most recent trip. He had spent the better part of his eight-year regime as president, military chief and overseer of a compliant parliament. Pakistan's transition from a military government to a civilian one involved chipping away at his almost absolute control over all three institutions one by one. But civilian leadership by itself was no balm for Pakistan's many ills; Zardari's new regime faces massive challenges regarding the economy, the Taliban and trying to bring the military intelligence agencies under some control.

In the seven months that I had been away, the economy had gone from bad to worse. The value of the rupee had fallen almost 25 percent against the dollar. An electricity shortage caused rolling blackouts for up to 12 hours a day. Reserves of foreign currencies plunged as the new government continued to subsidize basic amenities. All these factors contributed to popular discontent with the government, an emotion that the Taliban exploited by lambasting the regime's perceived deficiencies. In Karachi, the local political party covered the walls of buildings along busy streets with posters that read: "Save Your City From Talibanization."

Perhaps the biggest challenge for the new government is reining in the military's intelligence agencies, particularly the Inter-Services Intelligence, or ISI. The Pakistan Peoples Party has long been considered an anti-establishment party, at odds with the agencies. In late July, the PPP-led government announced that it was placing the ISI under the command of the Interior Ministry, wresting it from the army—then days later, under pressure from the military, reversed itself. A uniformed president may symbolize a military dictatorship, but Pakistan's military intelligence agencies, ISI and Military Intelligence (MI), are the true arbiters of power.

After a pair of mysterious telephone calls to the author (above: left) and his translator, government officials provided them with an armed guard. They joined travelers (below: left) on the road to this year's festival for Qalandar, where the faithful would gather at the shrine in Sehwan (below: right, in 2006).

In August, I got what I believe was a firsthand indication of the extent of their reach. Two days after Musharraf bid farewell, I began my trip to Sehwan for the urs for Qalandar, along with photographer Aaron Huey; his wife, Kristin; and a translator whom it is best not to name. We had barely left Karachi's city limits when my translator took a phone call from someone claiming to work at the Interior Ministry Secretariat in Karachi. The caller peppered him with questions about me. The translator, sensing something odd, hung up and called the office of a senior bureaucrat in the Interior Ministry. A secretary answered the phone and, when we shared the name and title our caller had given, confirmed what we already suspected: "Neither that person nor that office exists." The secretary added: "It's probably just the [intelligence] agencies."

We continued north on the highway into the heart of Sindh, past water buffaloes soaking in muddy canals and camels resting in the shade of mango trees. About an hour later, my phone

"Man, it's good to hear your voice," my friend said. "Local TV stations are reporting that you've been kidnapped."

rang. The caller ID displayed the same number as the call that had supposedly come from the Interior Ministry Secretariat.

"Hello?"

"Nicholas?"

"Yes."

"I am a reporter from the *Daily Express* newspaper. I want to meet you to talk about the current political situation. When can we meet? Where are you? I can come right now."

"Can I call you back?" I said, and hung up.

My heart raced. Images of Daniel Pearl, the *Wall Street Journal* reporter who was kidnapped and beheaded by Islamic militants in Karachi in 2002, flashed through my mind. Pearl's last meeting had been with a terrorist pretending to be a fixer and translator. Many people believe that the Pakistani intelligence agencies were involved in Pearl's killing, as he was researching a possible link between the ISI and a jihadi leader with ties to Richard Reid, the so-called shoe bomber.

My phone rang again. An Associated Press reporter I knew told me that her sources in Karachi said the intelligence agencies were searching for me. I had assumed as much. But what did they want? And why would they request a meeting by pretending to be people who didn't exist?

The car fell silent. My translator made a few calls to senior politicians, bureaucrats and police officers in Sindh. They said they were treating the two phone calls as a kidnapping threat and would provide us with an armed escort for the rest of our trip. Within an hour, two police trucks arrived. In the lead

truck, a man armed with a machine gun stood in the bed.

Another phone call, this time from a friend in Islamabad.

"Man, it's good to hear your voice," he said.

"Why?"

"Local TV stations are reporting that you've been kidnapped in Karachi."

Who was planting these stories? And why? With no shortage of conspiracy theories about fatal "car accidents" involving people in the bad graces of the intelligence agencies, I took the planted stories as serious warnings. But the urs beckoned. The four of us collectively decided that since we had traveled halfway around the world to see the shrine of Lal Shahbaz Qalandar, we would do our damndest to get there, even if under police protection. After all, we could use Qalandar's blessings.

That evening, as the setting sun burned the color of a Creamsicle as it lit the sugar-cane fields on the horizon, I turned to the translator, hoping to lighten the mood.

It didn't matter whether I was Christian, Muslim, Hindu or atheist. I had entered another realm.

"It's really beautiful here," I said.

He nodded, but his eyes stayed glued to the road. "Unfortunately, the fear factor spoils the whole fun of it," he said.

By then we could see buses clogging the highway, red flags flapping in the wind as the drivers raced for Qalandar's shrine. The railway ministry had announced that 13 trains would be diverted from their normal routes to transport worshipers. Some devotees even pedaled bicycles, red flags sticking up from the handlebars. We roared down the road in the company of Kalashnikov-toting police, a caravan of armed pilgrims.

Among the worshipers at the Qalandar shrine, one credited the saint with performing miracles. What kind of miracles? he was asked. "Take a look around," he said. "Can't you see how many people have come?"

The campsites began appearing about five miles from the shrine. Our car eventually mired in a human bog, so we parked and continued on foot. The alleys leading to the shrine reminded me of a carnival fun house—an overwhelming frenzy of lights, music and aromas. I walked beside a man blowing a snake charmer's flute. Stores lined the alley, with merchants squatting behind piles of pistachios, almonds and rosewater-doused candies. Fluorescent lights glowed like light sabers, directing lost souls to Allah.

Groups of up to 40 people heading for the shrine's golden dome carried long banners imprinted with Koranic verses. We followed one group into a tent packed with dancers and drummers next to the shrine. A tall man with curly, greasy shoulder-length hair was beating on a keg-size drum hanging from a leather strap around his neck. The intensity in his eyes, illuminated by a single bulb that dangled above our heads, reminded me of the jungle cats that stalked their nighttime prey on the nature shows I used to watch on TV.

A man in white linen lunged flamboyantly into a clearing at the center of the crowd, tied an orange sash around his waist and began to dance. Soon he was gyrating and his limbs were trembling, but with such control that at one point it seemed that he was moving only his earlobes. Clouds of hashish smoke rolled through the tent, and the drumming injected the space with a thick, engrossing energy.

I stopped taking notes, closed my eyes and began nodding my head. As the drummer built toward a feverish peak, I drifted unconsciously closer to him. Before long, I found

See more of Aaron Huey's Sufi photos at Smithsonian.com/sufi

myself standing in the middle of the circle, dancing beside the man with the exuberant earlobes.

"Mast Qalandar!" someone called out. The voice came from right behind me, but it sounded distant. Anything but the drumbeat and the effervescence surging through my body seemed remote. From the corner of my eye, I noticed photographer Aaron Huey high-stepping his way into the circle. He passed his camera to Kristin. In moments, his head was swirling as he whipped his long hair around in circles.

"Mast Qalandar!" another voice screamed.

If only for a few minutes, it didn't matter whether I was a Christian, Muslim, Hindu or atheist. I had entered another realm. I couldn't deny the ecstasy of Qalandar. And in that moment, I understood why pilgrims braved great distances and the heat and the crowds just to come to the shrine. While spun into a trance, I even forgot about the danger, the phone calls, the reports of my disappearance and the police escort.

Later, one of the men who had been dancing in the circle approached me. He gave his name as Hamid and said he had traveled more than 500 miles by train from northern Punjab. He and a friend were traversing the country, hopping from one shrine to another, in search of the wildest festival. "Qalandar is the best," he said. I asked why.

"He could communicate directly with Allah," Hamid said. "And he performs miracles."

"Miracles?" I asked, with a wry smile, having reverted to my normal cynicism. "What kind of miracles?"

He laughed. "What kind of miracles?" he said. "Take a look around!" Sweat sprayed from his mustache. "Can't you see how many people have come to be with Lal Shahbaz Qalandar?"

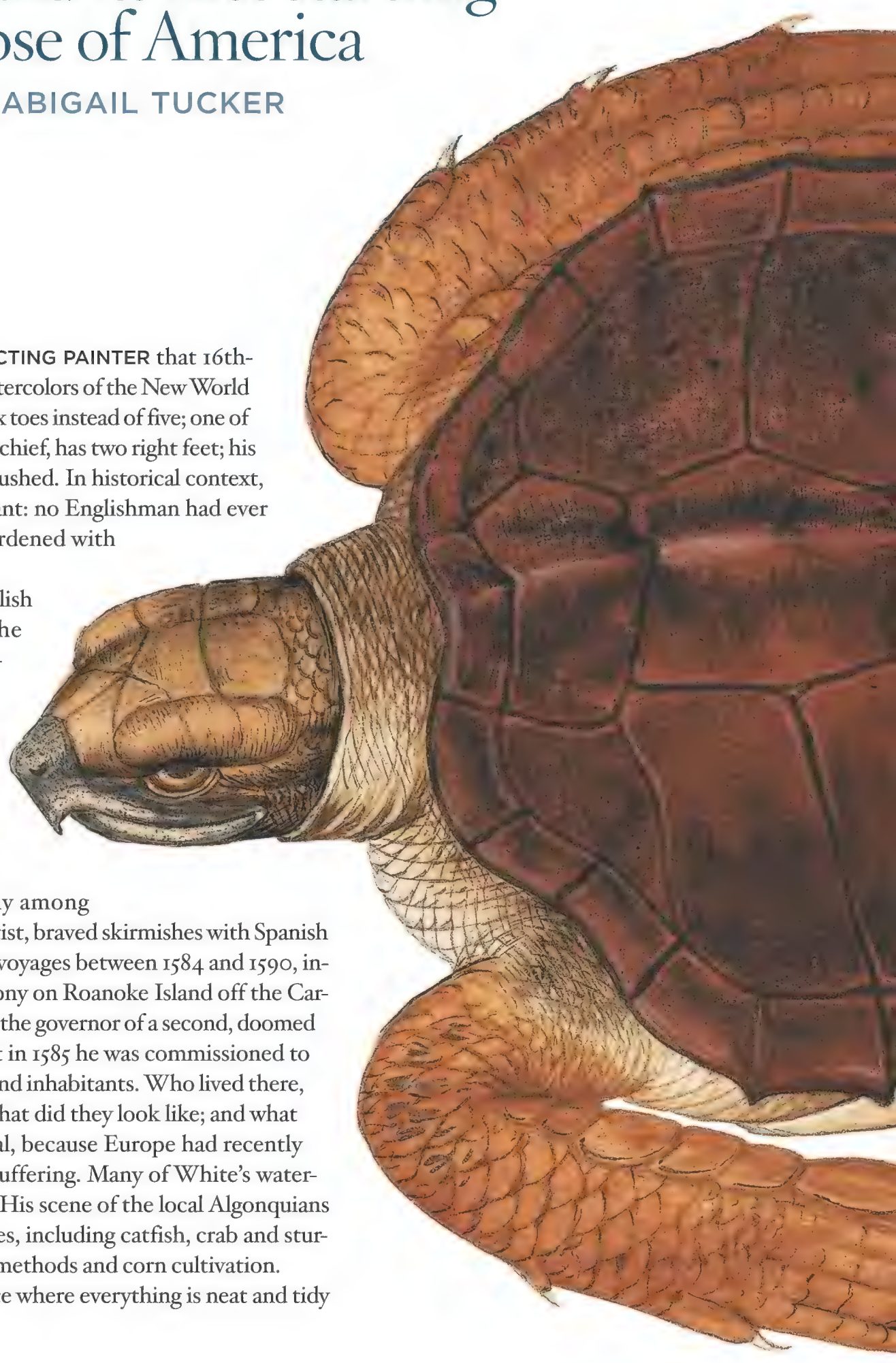
I looked over both of my shoulders at the drumming, the dhamaal and the sea of red. I stared back at Hamid and tilted my head slightly to acknowledge his point.

"Mast Qalandar!" we said.

BRAVE NEW WORLD

The watercolors that John White produced in 1585 gave England its first startling glimpse of America

BY ABIGAIL TUCKER



JOHN WHITE WASN'T THE MOST EXACTING PAINTER that 16th-century England had to offer, or so his watercolors of the New World suggest. His diamondback terrapin has six toes instead of five; one of his native women, the wife of a powerful chief, has two right feet; his study of a scorpion looks cramped and rushed. In historical context, though, these quibbles seem unimportant: no Englishman had ever painted America before. White was burdened with unveiling a whole new realm.

In the 1580s, England had yet to establish a permanent colonial foothold in the Western Hemisphere, while Spain's settlements in Central and South America were thriving. Sir Walter Raleigh sponsored a series of exploratory, and extraordinarily perilous, voyages to the coast of present-day North Carolina (then called Virginia, for the "Virgin Queen" Elizabeth) to drum up support for a colony among British investors. White, a gentleman-artist, braved skirmishes with Spanish ships and hurricanes to go along on five voyages between 1584 and 1590, including a 1585 expedition to found a colony on Roanoke Island off the Carolina coast. He would eventually become the governor of a second, doomed colony the British established there, but in 1585 he was commissioned to "drawe to life" the area's natural bounty and inhabitants. Who lived there, people back at court wanted to know; what did they look like; and what did they eat? This last question was vital, because Europe had recently entered a mini ice age and crops were suffering. Many of White's watercolors serve as a kind of pictorial menu. His scene of the local Algonquians fishing shows an enticing array of catches, including catfish, crab and sturgeon; other paintings dwell on cooking methods and corn cultivation.

"The message was: 'Come to this place where everything is neat and tidy

White likely did this study of a male Atlantic loggerhead on a stop in the West Indies en route to "Virginia" in 1585. "Their heads, feet, and tails look very ugly, like those of a venomous serpent," wrote Thomas Harriot, the expedition's scientist, of New World tortoises. "Nevertheless they are very good to eat, as are their eggs." White's iconic image (above) of an Algonquian chief (his jewelry, long bow, feathers and puma tail signal his wealth and status) came to symbolize all North American Indians at the time of early contact with Europeans.

and there is food everywhere!'" says Deborah Harkness, a science historian at the University of Southern California who studied White's watercolors and has written a book on Elizabethan London.

Occasionally, though, White seems to have been captivated by less digestible fare. He painted a magnificent watercolor study of a tiger swallowtail butterfly (opposite), and on a stop for provisions in the West Indies he rendered a "flye which in the night semeth a flame of fyer"—a firefly. These oddities, as much as his more practical illustrations, lodged in the Elizabethan imagination: engravings based on them were published in 1590, kindling interest in England's distant claims.

Today White's dozens of watercolors—the only surviving visual record of the land and peoples encountered by England's first settlers in America—remain vital documents for colonial scholars, who rejoiced when the works were exhibited earlier this year by the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh, the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut, and the Jamestown Settlement in Virginia. Owned by the British Museum, White's originals must be kept in storage, away from the damaging effects of light, for decades at a time; their transatlantic visit was a rarity.

Little is known about White's background. We do, however, know he married Thomasine Cooper in 1566 and they had at least two children. Before the 1585 expedition he may have been employed in Queen Elizabeth's Office of Revels, and he was almost certainly a gentleman—well educated and well connected; watercolor was considered a genteel medium, far more refined than oil. White sketched in graphite pencil and colored with indigo, vermilion and ground gold and silver leaf, among other pigments.

It's unclear when he actually completed his iconic American series, but he made his observations in the summer of 1585. After crossing the Atlantic, his ship stopped briefly in the West Indies, where White saw (and at some point painted)—in addition to the firefly—plantains, pineapples, flamingos and other curiosities. Soon afterward the explorers sailed north to the Carolina coast.

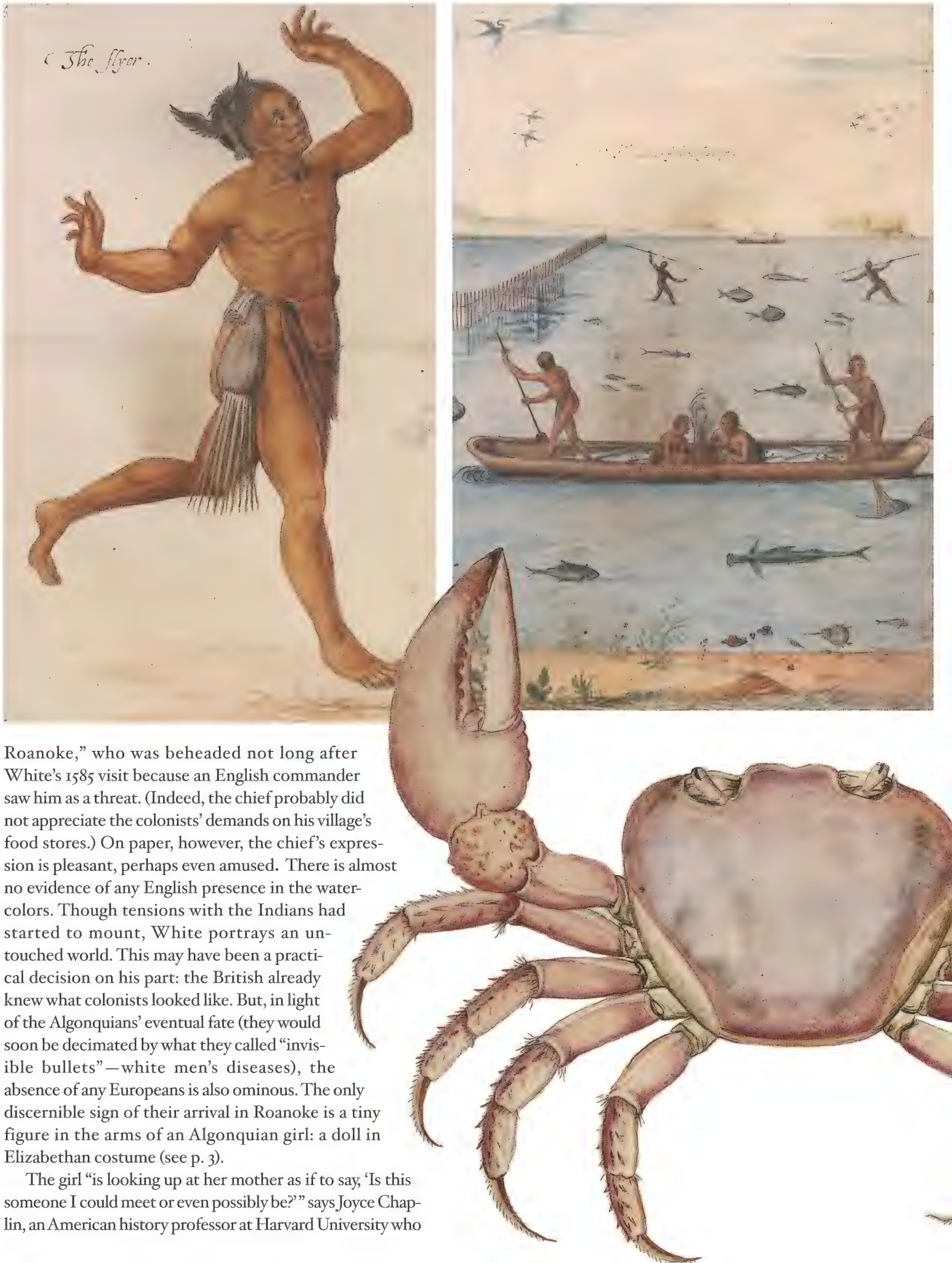
Magazine staff writer **ABIGAIL TUCKER** *reported on rare color photographs from the Korean War in the November issue.*

ALL IMAGES BY JOHN WHITE, WATERCOLOR, C. 1585. © THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

As they built a crude fort on Roanoke, White went on excursions and began depicting the native Algonquian peoples. He detailed their ceremonies, ossuaries and meals of hulled corn. He carefully rendered the puma tail dangling from one chief's apron and a medicine man's pouch of tobacco or herbs. "White was documenting an unknown population," says Peter Mancall, an early American historian at the University of Southern California who delivered the opening lecture for the Yale exhibition. "He was trying to show how women carried their children, what a sorcerer looked like, how they fished."

But White probably also tweaked his Algonquian portraits. The swaggering poses are borrowed from European painting conventions, and one chief carries a gigantic bow that, according to the catalog, "would have reminded any English person looking at it of the similarity between English soldiers and Indian warriors." Other scenes, posed or not, were likely painted with investors in mind. An Algonquian chief, for instance, wears a large copper pendant, signaling that the precious metal was to be found in the New World. Scholars believe this may be Wingina, the "King of

Harriot and White's "La Virginea Pars: map of the East coast of North America from Chesapeake Bay to Cape Lookout" (far left) has been described as "the most careful detailed piece of cartography for any part of North America to be made in the sixteenth century." The island of "Roanoac" is shaded red, as is Croatoan, to the south. The Algonquian town of Secotan, south of Lake Paquippe, is marked with a red dot. White did a rendering (center) of the town's bark and reed houses, open plan and plots of corn. The religious ceremony (top) may represent a Green Corn Festival. White's watercolor of a tiger swallowtail butterfly (above) is acknowledged as the first picture of an American butterfly.



Roanoke," who was beheaded not long after White's 1585 visit because an English commander saw him as a threat. (Indeed, the chief probably did not appreciate the colonists' demands on his village's food stores.) On paper, however, the chief's expression is pleasant, perhaps even amused. There is almost no evidence of any English presence in the watercolors. Though tensions with the Indians had started to mount, White portrays an untouched world. This may have been a practical decision on his part: the British already knew what colonists looked like. But, in light of the Algonquians' eventual fate (they would soon be decimated by what they called "invisible bullets"—white men's diseases), the absence of any Europeans is also ominous. The only discernible sign of their arrival in Roanoke is a tiny figure in the arms of an Algonquian girl: a doll in Elizabethan costume (see p. 3).

The girl "is looking up at her mother as if to say, 'Is this someone I could meet or even possibly be?'" says Joyce Chaplin, an American history professor at Harvard University who

White's charge was to "drawe to life" the New World's natural bounty and native inhabitants. He detailed the Algonquians' villages, ceremonies and attire. He showed how they fished (center), how they ate (hulled corn, left) and what a sorcerer looked like (far left). He also recorded examples of the flora and fauna he encounted on his travels. He probably painted his study of "A lande Crab" (below, left) when his ship stopped for supplies in Puerto Rico; several of the same crabs appear in a rendering he did of the British encampment there. Although White strove for accuracy, he occasionally made mistakes; the crab's eyes, for instance, are on stalks that in reality are inset rather than protruding. Nonetheless, his watercolors provided a vital record of England's first forays in America.

wrote an essay for the exhibition catalog. "It's very poignant." White's paintings and the text accompanying them (written by Thomas Harriot, a scientist also on the 1585 voyage) are virtually all that remain of that time and place. After presenting his paintings in England to an unknown patron, possibly Raleigh or the queen, White returned to Roanoke in 1587 as governor, bringing with him more than a hundred men, women and children. Their supplies quickly ran out, and White, leaving members of his own family on the island, returned to England for assistance. But English relations with the great sea power Spain had deteriorated, and as the Armada threatened, he was unable to get back to Roanoke until 1590. By then, the English settlers had vanished, and the mystery of the "Lost Colony" was born. It's still unclear whether the settlers died or moved south to assimilate with a friendly native village. At any rate, because of rough seas, the approaching hurricane season and damage to his ship, White was able to search for the colonists for only about a day and never learned the fate of his daughter, Elinor, his son-in-law, Ananias Dare, and his granddaughter, Virginia, the first English child born in North America.

Such hardships, British Museum curator Kim Sloan writes in the show's catalog, lead one to wonder "what drove this man even to begin, never mind persist in, an enterprise that lost him his family, his wealth and very nearly his life." White's own last years are also lost to history: the final record of his life is a letter from 1593 to Richard Hakluyt (an English author who wrote about voyages to America), in which White sums up his last trip—"as lucklesse to many, as sinister to my selfe."

Today some of the plants and animals White painted, including a glaring loggerhead turtle, are threatened. Even the watercolors themselves are in precarious condition, which is why the British Museum displays them only once every few decades. In the mid-19th century they sustained heavy water damage in a Sotheby's auction house fire. Chemical changes in the silver pigments have turned them black, and other colors are mere shadows of what they once were.

The originals were engraved and copied countless times, and versions showed up in everything from costume books to encyclopedias of insects. The paintings of Indians became so entrenched in the English consciousness that they were difficult to displace. Generations of British historians used White's illustrations to describe Native Americans, even those from other regions. Later painters, including the 18th-century natural history artist Mark Catesby, modeled their works on versions of White's watercolors.

Britain did not establish a permanent colony until Jamestown in 1607, nearly two decades after White left America for the last time. Jamestown was a settlement of businessmen: there was no gentleman-artist on hand to immortalize the native people there. In fact, the next major set of American Indian portraits would not appear until George Catlin painted the peoples of the Great Plains more than 200 years later.

The basilica (opposite) and its storied mosaics (including this 13th-century Madonna) constitute a matchless and threatened treasure. Architectural historian Dan Cruickshank calls it a "sacred mountain of a building, vast and elemental."

FADING

In Istanbul, secularists and fundamentalists clash over restoring the nearly 1,500-year-old Hagia Sophia

BY FERGUS M. BORDEWICH

GLORY

ZEYNEP AHUNBAY LED ME THROUGH the massive cathedral's cavernous nave and shadowy arcades, pointing out its fading splendors. Under the great dome, filtered amber light revealed vaulted arches, galleries and semi-domes, refracted from exquisite mosaics depicting the Virgin Mary and infant Jesus as well as long-vanished patriarchs, emperors and saints. Yet the overall impression was one of dingy neglect and piecemeal repair. I gazed up at patches of moisture and peeling paint; bricked-up windows; marble panels, their incised surfaces obscured under layers of grime; and walls covered in mustard-colored paint applied by restorers after golden mosaics had fallen away. The depressing effect was magnified by a tower of cast-iron scaffolding that cluttered the nave, testament to a lagging, intermittent campaign to stabilize the beleaguered monument.

"For months at a time, you don't see anybody working," said Ahunbay, a professor of architecture at Istanbul Technical University. She had directed a partial restoration of the building's exterior in the late 1990s and is regarded by conservators as its guardian angel. "One year there is a budget, the next year there is none," she said with a sigh. "We need a permanent restoration staff, conservators for the mosaics, frescoes and masonry, and we need to have them continuously at work."

"There most definitely are seismic threats to Hagia Sophia, and they are great. One tremor and the whole thing could come falling down."

Greeting her with a deferential salute, a workman beckoned us to accompany him through a massive wooden door, half hidden in shadow beneath an overhead gallery. Following the beam of his flashlight, we made our way across a pitch-dark antechamber and up a steep cobblestone ramp littered with fallen masonry and plaster. The incline may have been built to enable the sixth-century builders to cart construction materials to the second-story gallery. "There are problems here too," said Ahunbay, pointing to jagged cracks in the brick vaulting overhead.

VISIBLE FOR MILES across the Sea of Marmara, Istanbul's Hagia Sophia, with its giant buttresses and soaring minarets, symbolizes a cultural collision of epic proportions. (The name translates from the Greek as "Sacred Wisdom.") The structure stands not only as a magnificent architectural treasure but also as a complex accretion of myth, symbol and history. The landmark entwines the legacies of

Repairing the 180-foot-high nave (where stopgap efforts are ongoing) is but one challenge. "We need a permanent restoration staff," says conservator Zeynep Ahunbay (opposite).

medieval Christianity, the Ottoman Empire, resurgent Islam and modern secular Turkey in a kind of Gordian knot, confounding preservationists who want to save it from decay and restore its former glory.

In addition to the obvious challenges—leaks, cracks and neglect—an invisible menace may pose an even greater danger. Istanbul sits squarely atop a geologic fault line. "There most definitely are seismic threats to Hagia Sophia, and they are great," says Stephen J. Kelley, a Chicago-based architect and engineer who consults on Byzantine churches in Turkey, the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. "One tremor and the whole thing could come falling down."

"Conservationists are very concerned about Hagia Sophia," says John Stubbs, a vice president of the New York-based World Monuments Fund, which contributed $500,000 and raised another half million in matching funds for urgent repairs during the last decade. "It's an unbelievably complex structure. There's the roof, the stonework, marble, mosaics, paintings. We don't even know all that's in play in there. But we do know that it requires ongoing, vigilant attention. Hagia Sophia is an utterly unique building—a key monument in the history of architecture and a key symbol of the city of Constantinople right through to our time."

Constantinople, as Istanbul was known for centuries,

P. 54 ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY;
P. 55 YANN ARTHUS-BERTRAND / CORBIS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LYNSEY ADDARIO

owed its importance to the Emperor Constantine, who made it the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire in A.D. 330. Although an earlier basilica of the same name once stood on the site, today's Hagia Sophia was a creation of the Emperor Justinian, who rose from humble origins to become the greatest of the early rulers of the empire that historians would call Byzantium. During his 38-year reign, from 527 to 565, Justinian labored to bring harmony to the disputatious factions of the Eastern Orthodox Church; organized Roman law into a code that would influence European legal systems down to the present; and set his armies on the march, enlarging the empire until it reached from the Black Sea to Spain. He also erected hundreds of new churches, libraries and public edifices throughout the empire. Hagia Sophia, completed in 537, was his crowning architectural achievement. Until the 15th century, no building incorporated a floor space so vast under one roof. Four acres of golden glass cubes—millions of them—studded the interior to form a glittering canopy overhead, each one set at a subtly different angle to reflect the flicker of candles and oil lamps that illuminated nocturnal ceremonies. Forty thousand pounds of silver encrusted the sanctuary. Columns of purple porphyry and green marble were crowned by capitals so intricately carved that they seemed as fragile as lace. Blocks of marble, imported from as far away as Egypt and Italy, were cut into decorative panels that covered the walls, making the church's entire vast interior appear to swirl and dissolve before one's eyes. And then there is the astonishing dome, curving 110 feet from east to west, soaring 180 feet above the marble floor. The sixth-century historian Procopius marveled that it "does not appear to rest upon a solid foundation, but to cover the place beneath as though it were suspended from heaven by the fabled golden chain."

By 565, the Emperor Justinian presided over a vast realm (map). In the basilica he erected, a tenth-century mosaic depicts him (above, at left) offering the cathedral to the Virgin. "Glory to God," he said upon completing it, "who has thought me worthy to finish this work."

Magnificent as it was, Hagia Sophia contained none of its splendid figurative mosaics at first. Justinian may have acceded to the wishes of his wife, Theodora (who reputedly began her career as an entertainer and prostitute), and others who opposed the veneration of human images—later to become known as "iconoclasts." By the ninth century, those who worshiped such images, the "iconodules," gained ascendancy, commissioning artists to make up for lost time. Medieval pilgrims were awed by the mosaics, ranging from depictions of stylized angels to emperors and empresses, as well as a representation of an all-seeing Christ looming from the dome. Many of these images are lost; those few that remain are unique, says art his-

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ERICH LESSING / ART RESOURCE, NY; MAP: JOHN TOMANIO

torian Natalia Teteriatnikov, former curator at Dumbarton Oaks, in Washington, D.C., where a center for Byzantine studies is housed. "They cover almost the entire history of Byzantium, from 537 through the restoration of the icons and on up to imperial portraits from the late 14th century. No other Byzantine monument covers such a span of time."

Preservationist Verkin Arioba (in Istanbul) acknowledges the challenge presented by Hagia Sophia (converted to a mosque in 1453 by Mehmet the Conqueror, at right). She says no one knows how much work the building needs, "much less how much it would cost."

For more than 900 years, Hagia Sophia was the most important building in the Eastern Christian world: the seat of the Orthodox patriarch, counterpart to Roman Catholicism's pope, as well as the central church of the Byzantine emperors, whose palace stood nearby. "Hagia Sophia summed up everything that was the Orthodox religion," says Roger Crowley, author of *1453: The Holy War for Constantinople and the Clash of Islam and the West*. "For Greeks, it symbolized the center of their world. Its very structure was a microcosm of heaven, a metaphor for the divine mysteries of Orthodox Christianity." Pilgrims came from across the Eastern Christian world to view its icons, believed to work miracles, and an unmatched collection of sacred relics. Within the cathedral's holdings were artifacts alleged to include pieces of the True Cross; the lance that pierced Christ's side; the ram's horns with which Joshua blew down the walls of Jericho; the olive branch carried by the dove to Noah's ark after the Flood; Christ's tunic; the crown of thorns; and Christ's own blood. "Hagia Sophia," says Crowley, "was the mother church—it symbolized the everlastingness of Constantinople and the Empire."

In the 11th century, the Byzantines suffered the first in a series of devastating defeats at the hands of Turkish armies, who surged westward across Anatolia, steadily whittling away at the empire. The realm was further weakened in 1204 when western European crusaders en route to the Holy Land, overtaken by greed, captured and looted Constantinople. The city never fully recovered.

By the mid-15th century, Constantinople was hemmed in by Ottoman-controlled territories. On May 29, 1453, after a seven-week siege, the Turks launched a final assault. Bursting through the city's defenses and overwhelming its outnumbered defenders, the invaders poured into the streets, sacking churches and palaces, and cutting down anyone who stood in their way. Terrified citizens flocked to Hagia Sophia, hoping that its sacred precincts would protect them, praying desperately that, as an ancient prophesied, an avenging angel would hurtle down to smite the invaders before they reached the great church.

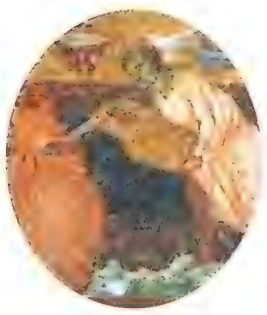
"For the Byzantines, it was the end of the world." Memory of the catastrophe haunted the Greeks for centuries.

Instead, the sultan's janissaries battered through the great wood-and-bronze doors, bloody swords in hand, bringing an end to an empire that had endured for 1,123 years. "The scene must have been horrific, like the Devil entering heaven," says Crowley. "The church was meant to embody heaven on earth, and here were these aliens in turbans and robes, smashing tombs, scattering bones, hacking up icons for their golden frames. Imagine

BOTTOM: BILDARCHIV PREUSSISCHER KULTURBESITZ / ART RESOURCE, NY

appalling mayhem, screaming wives being ripped from the arms of their husbands, children torn from parents, and then chained and sold into slavery. For the Byzantines, it was the end of the world." Memory of the catastrophe haunted the Greeks for centuries. Many clung to the legend that the priests who were performing services that day had disappeared into Hagia Sophia's walls and would someday reappear, restored to life in a reborn Greek empire.

That same afternoon, Constantinople's new overlord, Sultan Mehmet II, rode triumphantly to the shattered doors of Hagia Sophia. Mehmet was one of the great figures of his age. As ruthless as he was cultivated, the 21-year-old conqueror spoke at least four languages, including Greek, Turkish, Persian and Arabic, as well as some Latin. He was an admirer of European culture and patronized Italian artists, such as the Venetian master Gentile Bellini, who painted him as a bearded, introspective figure swathed in an enormous robe, his small eyes gazing reflectively over an aristocratically arched nose. "He was ambitious, superstitious, very cruel, very intelligent, paranoid and obsessed with world domination," says Crowley. "His role models were Alexander the Great and Julius Caesar. He saw himself as coming not to destroy the empire, but to become the new Roman emperor." Later, he would cast medallions that proclaimed him, in Latin, "*Imperator Mundi*"—"Emperor of the World."



"We must carry out the dictates of civilization. We draw our strength from civilization, scholarship and science and are guided by them."

Before entering the church, Mehmet bent down to scoop up a fistful of earth, pouring it over his head to symbolize his abasement before God. Hagia Sophia was the physical embodiment of imperial power: now it was his. He declared that it was to be protected and was immediately to become a mosque. Calling for an imam to recite the call to prayer, he strode through the handful of terrified Greeks who had not already been carted off to slavery, offering mercy to some. Mehmet then climbed onto the altar and bowed down to pray.

Among Christians elsewhere, reports that Byzantium had fallen sparked widespread anxiety that Europe would be overrun by a wave of militant Islam. "It was a 9/11 moment," says Crowley. "People wept in the streets of Rome. There was mass panic. People long afterward remembered exactly where they were when they heard the news." The "terrible Turk," a slur popularized in diatribes disseminated across Europe by the newly invented printing press, soon became a synonym for savagery.

In fact, the Turks treated Hagia Sophia with honor. In contrast to other churches that had been seized and converted into mosques, the conquerors refrained from changing its name, merely adapting it to the Turkish spelling. ("Ayasofya" is the way it is written in Turkey today.) Mehmet, says Ilber Ortayli, director of the Topkapi Palace Museum, the former residence of the Ottoman emperors, "was a man of the Renaissance, an intellectual. He was not a fanatic. He recognized Hagia Sophia's greatness and he saved it."

Remarkably, the sultan allowed several of the finest Christian mosaics to remain, including the Virgin Mary and images of the seraphs, which he considered to be guardian spirits of the city. Under subsequent regimes, however, more orthodox sultans would be less tolerant. Eventually, all of the figurative mosaics were plastered over. Where Christ's visage had once gazed out from the dome, Koranic verses in Arabic proclaimed: "In the name of God the merciful and pitiful, God is the light of heaven and earth."

Until 1934, Muslim calls to prayer resounded from Hagia Sophia's four minarets—added after Mehmet's conquest. In that year, Turkey's first president, Kemal Ataturk, secularized Hagia Sophia as part of his revolutionary campaign to westernize Turkey. An agnostic, Ataturk ordered Islamic madrassas (religious schools) closed; banned the veil; and gave women the vote—making Turkey the first Muslim country to do so. He cracked down harshly on

See more images of Hagia Sophia at Smithsonian.com/hagiasophia

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Visitors are inevitably struck by the edifice's scale (clockwise, from top left: 16th-century watercolor; 1800s interior and exterior; cameo, mosaic detail). A sixth-century historian wrote of its "marvelous beauty, overwhelming to those who see it."

ULLSTEIN BILD / GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK

once-powerful religious orders. "Fellow countrymen," he warned, "you must realize that the Turkish Republic cannot be the country of sheikhs or dervishes. If we want to be men, we must carry out the dictates of civilization. We draw our strength from civilization, scholarship and science and are guided by them. We do not accept anything else." Of Hagia Sophia he declared: "This should be a monument for all civilization." It thus became the world's first mosque to be turned into a museum. Says Ortayli, "At the time, this was an act of radical humanism."

Although ethnic Greeks constituted a sizable proportion of Istanbul's population well into the 20th century, the heritage of Byzantium was virtually expunged from history, first by Mehmet's Ottoman successors, then by a secular Turkey trying to foster Turkish nationalism. Nobel Prize-winning author Orhan Pamuk says that by the 1960s, Hagia Sophia had become a remnant of an unimaginably distant age. "As for the Byzantines," he writes in his memoir, *Istanbul*, "they had vanished into thin air soon after the conquest, or so I'd been led to believe. No one had told me that it was their grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren who now ran the shoe stores, patisseries, and haberdasheries of Beyoglu," a center-city neigborhood.

Turkish authorities have made little effort to excavate and protect the vestiges of Byzantium (apart from Hagia Sophia and a handful of other sites) that lie buried beneath modern Istanbul. The city's growth from a population of 1 million in the 1950s to 12 million today has created development pressures that preservationists are ill equipped to resist. Robert Ousterhout, an architectural historian at the University of Pennsylvania, has worked on Byzantine sites in Turkey since the 1980s; he was once awakened in the middle of the night by work crews surreptitiously demolishing a sixth-century Byzantine wall behind his house to make room for a new parking lot. "This is happening all over old Istanbul," says Ousterhout. "There are laws, but there's no enforcement. Byzantine Istanbul is literally disappearing day by day and month by month."

Hagia Sophia, of course, is in no danger of being knocked down in the middle of the night. It is almost universally regarded as the nation's "Taj Mahal," as one conservator put it. But the monument's fate remains hostage to the roiling political and religious currents of present-day Turkey. "The building has always been treated in a symbolic way—by Christians, Muslims, and by Ataturk and his secular followers," says Ousterhout. "Each group looks at Hagia Sophia and sees a totally different building." Under Turkish laws dating from the 1930s, public prayer is prohibited in the museum. Nevertheless, religious extremists are bent on reclaiming it for their respective faiths, while other Turks remain equally determined to retain it as a national symbol of a proud—and secular—civilization.

Hagia Sophia has also become a potent symbol for Greeks and Greek-Americans. In June 2007, Chris Spirou, president of the Free Agia Sophia Council of America, a U.S.-based advocacy group whose Web site features photographs depicting the building with its minarets erased, testified in Washington, D. C. at hearings sponsored by the Congressional Human Rights Caucus that the one-time cathedral had been "taken prisoner" by the Turks; he called for it to be restored as the "Holy House of Prayer for all Christians of the world and the Basilica of Orthodoxy that it was before the conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks." Spirou then asserted, in terms usually reserved for the world's outlaw regimes, that "Hagia Sophia stands as the greatest testimony to the ruthlessness, the insensitivity and the barbaric behavior of rulers and conquerors towards human beings and their rights." Such rhetoric fuels anxiety among some Turkish Muslims that Western concern for Hagia Sophia reflects a hidden plan to restore it to Christianity.

At the same time, Turkish Islamists demand the reconse-

Crumbling mosaics (above: from c. 1260) attest to large-scale deterioration. "Conservationists are very concerned about Hagia Sophia," says John Stubbs of New York's World Monuments Fund. "It's an unbelievably complex structure."

cration of Hagia Sophia as a mosque, a position once espoused by Turkey's current prime minister, 54-year-old Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who, as a rising politician in the 1990s, asserted that "Ayasofya should be opened to Muslim prayers." (Erdogan frightened secularists even more at the time by declaring his support for introduction of Islamic law, announcing that "For us, democracy is a means to an end.") Erdogan went on to become mayor of Istanbul and to win election as prime minister in 2003. The effect of increased religiosity is evident in the streets of Istanbul, where women wearing head scarfs and ankle-length dresses are far more common than they were only a few years ago.

"Hagia Sophia is a pawn in the game of intrigue between the secular and religious parties."

As prime minister, Erdogan, reelected with a large majority in July 2007, shed his earlier rhetoric and has pursued a moderate and conciliatory course, rejecting political Islam, reaffirming Turkey's desire to join the European Union and maintaining—however tenuously—a military alliance with the United States. "Erdogan-type Islamists are resolved not to challenge through word or deed the basic premises of the secular democratic state that Turkey wants to institutionalize," says Metin Heper, a political scientist at Bilkent University in Ankara. Although Erdogan has not publicly repudiated his stance on reopening Hagia Sophia to Muslim prayer, he has scrupulously enforced existing law against it.

To more ideological Islamists, Hagia Sophia proclaims Islam's promise of ultimate triumph over Christianity. In November 2006, a visit by Pope Benedict XVI to Hagia Sophia prompted an outpouring of sectarian rage. The pope intended this as a gesture of goodwill, having previously antagonized Muslims by a speech in which he quoted a Byzantine emperor's characterization of Islam as a violent religion. But tens of thousands of protesters, who believed that he was arriving to stake a Christian claim to Hagia Sophia, jammed surrounding streets and squares in the days before his arrival, beating drums and chanting "Constantinople is forever Islamic" and "Let the chains break and Ayasofya open." Hundreds of women wearing head coverings brandished a petition that they claimed contained one million signatures demanding the reconversion of Hagia Sophia. Thirty-nine male protesters were arrested by police for staging a pray-in inside the museum. When the pope finally arrived at Hagia Sophia, traveling along streets lined with police and riding in an armored car rather than his open popemobile, he refrained from even making the sign of the cross. In the museum's guest book, he inscribed only the cautiously ecumenical phrase, "God should illuminate us and help us find the path of love and peace." (There still has been no real rapprochement between the Vatican and Turkish Islam.)

For secular Turks, also, Hagia Sophia retains power as a symbol of Turkish nationalism and Ataturk's embattled

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cultural legacy. Many are dismayed by the possibility of Islamic radicals taking over the building. "Taking Ayasofya back into a mosque is totally out of the question!" says Istar Gozaydin, a secularist scholar and expert on political Islam. "It is a symbol of our secular republic. It is not just a mosque, but part of the world's heritage."

As a symbol, its future would seem to be caught in an ideological no man's land, where any change in status quo threatens to upset the delicate balance of mistrust. "Hagia Sophia is a pawn in the game of intrigue between the secular and religious parties," says Ousterhout. "There's an alarmist response on both sides. They always assume the worst of each other. Secularists fear that religious groups are part of a conspiracy funded from Saudi Arabia, while religious people fear that the secularists want to take their mosques away from them." The situation is exacerbated by bitter battles over the larger role of Islam in political life and the right of women who wear Islamic head scarfs to attend schools and universities. "Neither side is willing to negotiate," says Ousterhout. "There's a visceral mistrust on both sides. Meanwhile, scholars fear offending either group, getting in trouble and losing their jobs. All this makes it harder and harder to work on Byzantine sites." Several attempts to finance large-scale restoration with funds from abroad have been stymied by suspicion of foreigners, a problem that has been made worse by the war in Iraq, fiercely opposed by a large majority of Turks.

Experts agree that massive restoration must begin soon if Hagia Sophia, viewed from the Bosporus (above), is to survive. After all, says architectural historian Robert Ousterhout, it is "the premier monument of Byzantine civilization."

Astonishingly—although many scholars have studied Hagia Sophia over the years—the building has never been completely documented. New discoveries may yet be made. In the 1990s, during emergency repairs on the dome, workers uncovered graffiti that had been scrawled by tenth-century repairmen, imploring God for protection as they worked from scaffolds 150 feet above the floor. "*Kyrie, voithi to sou doulo, Gregorio*," ran a typical one—"Lord, help your servant, Gregorius." Says Ousterhout, "You can imagine how scared they might have been up there."

Daunting work must be done for Hagia Sophia to survive for future centuries. "This is the premier monument of Byzantine civilization," says Ousterhout. "Old buildings like Hagia Sophia are ignored until there's an emergency. They're put back together and then forgotten about until the next emergency. Meanwhile, there is a continual deterioration."

Huge sections of ceiling are peeling and flaking, stained by water seepage and discolored by age and uneven exposure to light. Acres of stucco must be replaced. Windows must be repaired, new glass installed, warped frames replaced. Hundreds of marble panels, now grime-encrusted, must be cleaned. Irreplaceable mosaics must somehow be restored and protected.

"There is no long-term plan to conserve the mosaics that still survive," says art historian Teteriatnikov, who adds that a more coordinated effort is needed to protect the structure from earthquakes. "Hagia Sophia is uniquely vulnerable," says architectural engineer Stephen Kelley, "because, in an earthquake, unless a building acts as a single tightly connected unit, its parts will work against each other." The structure, he adds, comprises "additions and alterations with many natural breaks in the construction. We just don't know how stable [it] is."

"At this point, we don't even know how much consolidation and restoration the building needs, much less how much it would cost," says Verkin Arioba, founder of the Historical Heritage Protection Foundation of Turkey, which has called for an international campaign to save the monument. "How do we approach it? How should the work be prioritized? First we need to assess how much damage has been done to the building. Then we'll at least know what must be done."

Meanwhile, Hagia Sophia continues its slow slide toward decay. "We have to rediscover Hagia Sophia," said Zeynep Ahunbay, as we left the gloom of the antechamber and reentered the nave. I watched a trapped dove swoop down through ancient vaults and colonnades, then up again toward the canopy of shimmering gold mosaic, its wings beating urgently, like the lost soul of bygone Byzantines. "It is a huge and complicated building," she said. "It has to be studied the way you study old embroidery, stitch by stitch."

DENNIS COX / WORLDVIEWS

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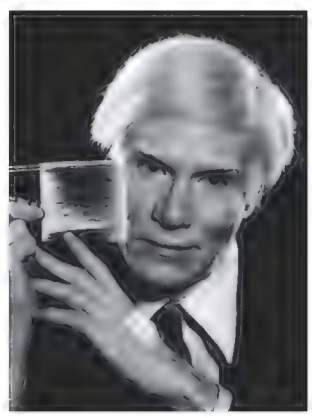
BY MATTHEW GUREWITSCH

Karsh, c. 1950s

PHOTOGRAPHY FANS KNOW HIM as the man who shot Winston Churchill—shot him in 1941 in a back room at the Canadian Parliament, having plucked the great man's cigar from his mouth and been rewarded with a glower that made the cover of *Life* magazine. Said to be one of the most widely reproduced images in history, the portrait Yousuf Karsh made that day has also graced the postage stamps of seven countries. "You can even make a roaring lion stand still to be photographed," the statesman declared, whereupon he magnanimously permitted a second click of the shutter. The alternate take, long known only to the Churchill family, shows a twinkle in the lion's eye and the hint of a smile. Side by side (see p. 69), the images look as disconcertingly alike and unalike as Goya's *Maja Desnuda*, a nude on a couch, and his *Maja Vestida*, same couch, same pose, same woman, dressed.

Karsh took pictures for the ages. "How," he once asked an interviewer, "can you possibly photograph an Einstein or a Helen Keller, or Eleanor Roosevelt, a Hemingway or a Churchill, and not realize they are already part of history? If your photograph is the summation of these people's many accomplishments, besides showing their human side, then the historical point of view is fulfilled." And how might one image achieve all that?

By the time he died, in 2002 at the age of 93, Karsh was well known for having shot the better known. Once he had immortalized Churchill, getting "Karshed" became as requisite a perk of fame as an entry in Who's Who, for Mother Teresa no less than for a saintly George Bernard Shaw, the ravishing young Princess Elizabeth, a rascally Robert Frost, the cigarette-smoking André Malraux or Grace Kelly in profile. This year, to mark the centennial of Karsh's birth, leading institutions from coast to coast have mounted trib-



TOP: YOUSUF KARSH COLLECTION

AUDREY HEPBURN • 1956 "Years later, in the Kremlin," Karsh would recall, "[Leonid] Brezhnev agreed to sit for me only if I made him as beautiful as Audrey Hepburn."

FIDEL CASTRO • 1971 The Cuban president removed his pistol before sitting for Karsh in Havana.

MOTHER TERESA • 1988 On a fund-raising tour of Canada, she initially declined to sit for Karsh but then relented "if it would help" her mission of caring for the poor.

ANDY WARHOL • 1979 "He was ubiquitous," Karsh wrote, "the perennial guest of those who would influence the era."

utes. "Karsh 100: A Biography in Images" is on view through January 19 at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the city where the photographer began his career.

Although its early chapters were shaped by terrors, his was largely a happy story. Born in Armenia in December 1908, Karsh landed in Halifax, Nova Scotia, by way of Beirut on New Year's Eve, 1925, sponsored by George Nakash of Sherbrooke, Quebec, an uncle he had never met. The atrocities and deprivations Karsh had suffered back home had not snuffed out his innate *joie de vivre*, and in time he would reunite his family in the New World. But first, there was the matter of carving out a livelihood. Nakash, a photographer, sent his nephew to Boston to apprentice with John H. Garo, a fellow Armenian in whose fashionable photo studio Brahmins mingled easily with artists. Garo gave Karsh a thorough grounding in the craft and art of studio portraiture, acquainted him with the works of Rembrandt and Velázquez, and included him in his social circle. "During those days of Prohibition," Karsh recalled in an autobiographical essay, "my extracurricular duties included acting as bartender for the hospitality that flowed, delivered to the studio in innocent-looking paint cans."

ERNEST HEMINGWAY • 1957
The novelist was, to Karsh, "a man cruelly battered by life, but seemingly invincible."

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. • 1962
"What emerged in my mind," Karsh would say after photographing King in Georgia, was "the dedication of the man and his clear vision of ultimate victory."

ANITA EKBERG • 1956 **The actress resembled the love goddesses she played, Karsh thought—"uninhibited and seductive, totally without guile."**

JACQUES COUSTEAU • 1972
The marine explorer impressed Karsh as a "knight of the twentieth century."

Under Garo, Karsh developed a lifelong addiction to the company of the great and glamorous. "Even as a young man," he said, "I was aware that these glorious afternoons and evenings in Garo's salon were my university. There I set my heart on photographing those men and women who leave their mark on the world." The studio Karsh opened in Ottawa in 1932 remained his professional address for six decades, but as he came into his own, his assignments and his passion turned him into a road warrior. "Any room in the world where I could set up my portable lights and camera—from Buckingham Palace to a Zulu kraal, from miniature Zen Buddhist temples in Japan to the splendid Renaissance chambers of the Vatican—would become my studio," he wrote. A single page of the memorial volume *Karsh: A Biography in Images*, captures our hero, incurably star-struck, in shots with Pope John Paul II and Jim Henson, creator of the Muppets, who are represented by Kermit.

In later life, Karsh took to publishing his albums with captions, brief or extensive, suggesting that each likeness was the record of some deep meeting of minds, whether it lasted half a minute or several days. He shot Al Hirschfeld, the theatrical caricaturist, and Hirschfeld drew him. But most of his great subjects saw him as a professional, not as a peer. "Unfortunately, I have no memory of the session," one subject of the late collection *American Legends: Photographs and Commentary* told me recently. "Or, to be more accurate, nothing memorable happened. Sorry."

The curator Jerry Fielder has written that Karsh "looked for, and found, the best in people," and that he "searched for the truth." But is the best the truth? Karsh shot Fidel Castro, with whom he swilled rum and Coke and swapped tales of Papa Hemingway. He shot the war criminal Alfred Krupp in a forgiving close-up. He tried in vain to shoot Stalin. Given the chance, he once told an interviewer, he would have photographed Hitler and Mussolini. He showed Charles Schulz grinning confidently at his drawing board, though the world now understands that the cartoonist's art had its roots in lifelong feelings of inadequacy and depression.

How does Karsh's work stand up? Critics have praised and mocked his mannerist obsession with sculpturally posed hands. (He liked props, too, and could use them well: a clear drafting triangle for Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, a miniature Rodin *Thinker* for Bill Clinton.) But today's connoisseurs are apt to exclude Karsh from the company of such mandarins as Richard Avedon, Irving Penn and Arnold Newman. Karsh held a reported 15,312 sittings during the life of his studio. For every Walt Disney or Carl Jung or Madame Chiang Kai-shek, there were hundreds of mere paying customers: college graduates, brides and bridegrooms, or corporate executives dropping in for the name-brand official portrait, expecting the ceremonial old master lighting and monumental poise that were Karsh's bread and butter.

If the object of serious portraiture is to lift the mask, Karsh seldom pulls it off. He excelled at hagiography and left psychological penetration mostly in the eye of the beholder. But taken in bulk, the likenesses of his men and women who left their mark on the world add up to the record of a life richly lived—his own. As autobiography, though never intended as such, they are most revealing.

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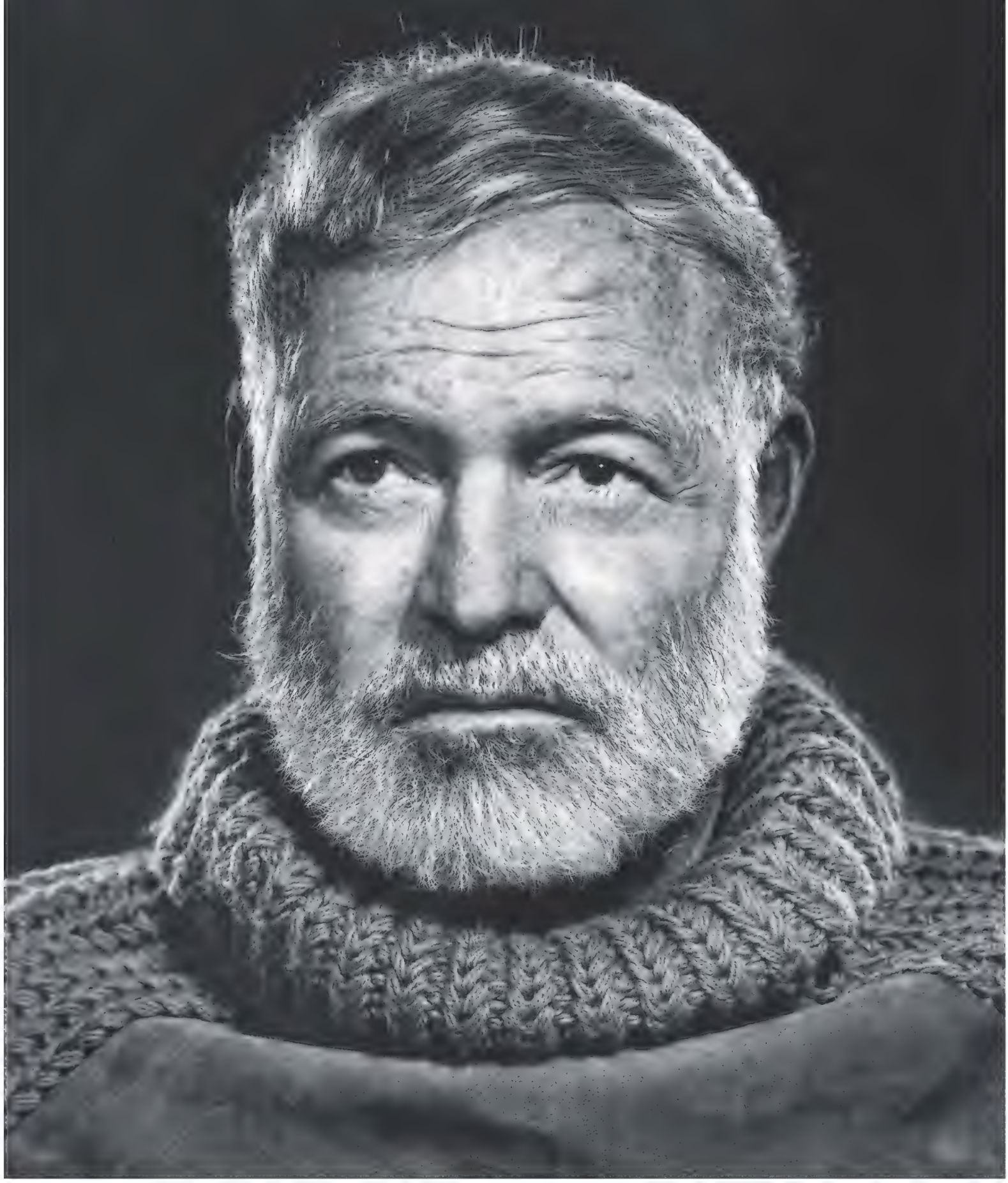


TWO CHURCHILLS • 1941 Karsh's "roaring lion" portrait (far left) became a symbol of British resolve in wartime—but the photographer initially preferred the "smile of confidence" (left) that appeared when the prime minister's mood lifted.

THE PYGMIES' PLIGHT

Some 50 Pygmies of the Baka clan lead me single file through a steaming rain forest in Cameroon. Scrambling across tree trunks over streams, we hack through heavy undergrowth with machetes and cut away vinelike lianas hanging like curtains in our path. After two hours, we reach a small clearing beneath a hardwood tree canopy that almost blots out the sky.

For thousands of years Pygmies have lived in harmony with equatorial Africa's magnificent jungles. They inhabit a narrow band of tropical rain forest about four degrees above and four degrees below the Equator, stretching from Cameroon's Atlantic coast eastward to Lake Victoria in Uganda. With about 250,000 of them remaining, Pygmies are the largest group of hunter-gatherers left on earth. But they are under serious threat.

Over the past decade, I've visited Pygmy clans in several Congo Basin countries, witnessing the destruction of their traditional lifestyle by the Bantu, as taller Africans are widely known. On this trip, this past February, my companion is Manfred Mesumbe, a Cameroonian anthropologist and expert on Pygmy culture. "The Bantu governments have forced them to stop living in the rain forests, their culture's bedrock," he tells me. "Within a generation many of their unique traditional ways will be gone forever."

The Baka clan members begin putting up beehive-shaped huts in the clearing, where we will spend the next few days. They chop saplings from among the trees and thrust the ends into the ground, bending them to form the frame of each hut. Then they weave bundles of green leaves into latticework to create a rainproof skin. None of the men stands higher than my shoulder (I'm 5-foot-7), and the women are smaller. As the Baka bring firewood to the camp, Mesumbe and I put up our small tent. Suddenly the Pygmies stir.

Three scowling Bantus brandishing machetes stride into the clearing. I fear that they're bandits, common in this lawless place. I'm carrying my money in a bag strung around my neck, and news of strangers travels fast among the Bantu here. Mesumbe points to one of them, a stocky man with an angry

A HOME IN THE WOODS

Equatorial Africa's rain forests have sustained Pygmies (right: in the Central African Republic, c. 2004) for millennia. Now other peoples are competing for the forests' resources, displacing the Pygmies.

A correspondent who chronicled their lives in central African rain forests returns a decade later and is shocked by what he finds

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL RAFFAELE

"IT'S TIME TO HUNT"

A decade ago, Wasse demonstrated his prowess in the forests near his village in the Central African Republic. On a return trip six years later, the author found that Wasse had sold his weapons and taken to palm wine.

look, and in a low voice tells me he is Joseph Bikono, chief of the Bantu village near where the government has forced the Pygmies to live by the roadside.

Bikono glares at me and then at the Pygmies. "Who gave you permission to leave your village?" he demands in French, which Mesumbe translates. "You Pygmies belong to me, you know that, and you must always do what I say, not what you want. I own you. Don't ever forget it."

Most of the Pygmies bow their heads, but one young man steps forward. It's Jeantie Mutulu, one of the few Baka Pygmies who have gone to high school. Mutulu tells Bikono that the Baka have always obeyed him and have always left the forest for the village when he told them to do so. "But not now," Mutulu announces. "Not ever again. From now on, we'll do what we want."

About half the Pygmies begin shouting at Bikono, but the other half remain silent. Bikono glowers at me. "You, *le blanc*," he yells, meaning, "the white." "Get out of the forest now."

The earliest known reference to a Pygmy—a "dancing dwarf of the god from the land of spirits"—is found in a letter written around 2276 B.C. by Pharaoh Pepi II to the leader of an Egyptian trade expedition up the Nile. In the *Iliad*, Homer invoked mythical warfare between Pygmies and a flock of cranes to describe the intensity of a charge by the Trojan army. In the fifth century B.C., the Greek historian Herodotus wrote of a Persian explorer who saw "dwarfish people, who used clothing made from the palm tree" at a spot along the West African coast.

More than two millennia passed before the French-American explorer Paul du Chaillu published the first modern account of Pygmies. "[T]heir eyes had an untameable wildness about them that struck me as very remarkable," he wrote in 1867. In *In Darkest Africa*, published in 1890, the explorer Henry Stanley wrote of meeting a Pygmy couple ("In him was a mimicked dignity, as of Adam; in her the womanliness of a miniature Eve"). In 1904, several Pygmies were brought to live in the anthropology exhibit at the St. Louis World's Fair. Two years later, a Congo Pygmy named Ota Benga was housed temporarily at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City—and then exhibited, briefly and controversially, at the Bronx Zoo.

Just last year, the Congo Republic organized a festival of pan-African music in the capital, Brazzaville. Other participants were put up in the city's hotels, but the organizers housed the 22 Pygmy performers in tents at the local zoo.

The word "Pygmy" comes from the Greek for "dwarfish," but Pygmies differ from dwarfs in that their limbs are conventionally proportioned. Beginning in 1967, an Italian geneticist, Luigi Luca Cavalli-Sforza, spent five winters measuring Pygmies in equatorial Africa. He found those in the Ituri forest, in Congo, to be the smallest, with men averaging 4 feet 9

inches in height and women about three inches less. Researchers are trying to determine why Pygmies have evolved to be so diminutive.

I first encountered Pygmies a decade ago, when I visited the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve in the Central African Republic, an impoverished nation in the Congo Basin, on assignment for *Reader's Digest*'s international editions. The park lies about 200 miles southwest of the national capital, Bangui, along a dirt road hacked through the jungle. In good weather, the journey from Bangui takes 15 hours. When the rains come, it can take days.

We arrived at a village called Mossapola—20 beehive huts—shortly before dawn. Pygmy women in tattered sarongs squatted around several fires as they warmed water and cooked cassava. Most of the men were uncoiling large nets near the huts. About 100 Pygmies lived there.

Through William Bienvenu, my Bantu translator at the time, one of the Dzanga-Sangha Pygmies introduced himself as Wasse. When the translator told me Wasse was the greatest hunter in the Bayaka clan, his broad face broke into a smile. A woman walked down the slope and stood by him, and Wasse introduced her as his wife, Jandu. Like most Bayaka women, her front upper teeth had been carefully chipped (with a machete, my translator said) into points. "It makes me look beautiful for Wasse," Jandu explained.

"WHO GAVE YOU PERMISSION?" **The question Joseph Bikono (top) put to a Pygmy clan in Cameroon reflects a prejudice common among Bantu, as taller Africans are known. Anthropologist Manfred Mesumbe (with a Pygmy chief and his family) fears that aspects of Pygmy culture will be eradicated "within a generation."**

Wasse had a coiled hunting net slung over his shoulder. He tugged at it, as if to get my attention. "We've talked enough," he said. "It's time to hunt."

A dozen Pygmy men and women bearing hunting nets piled into and on top of my Land Rover. About ten miles along a jungle track, Wasse ordered the driver to turn into the dense undergrowth. The Pygmies began shouting and chanting.

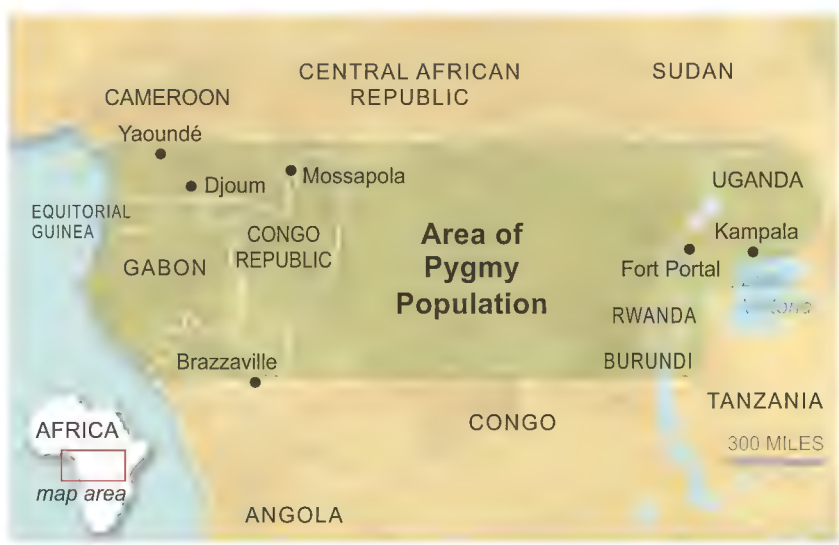
In a little while, we left the vehicle in search of the Pygmies' favorite food, *mboloko*, a small forest antelope also known as blue duiker. High overhead, chimpanzees scrambled from tree to tree, almost hidden in the foliage. As we climbed a slope thick with trees, Wasse raised an arm to signal a halt. Without a word the hunters swiftly set six vine nets into a semicircle across the hillside. Wooden toggles hooked onto saplings held the nets firm.

The Bayaka disappeared up the slope, and a few minutes later the jungle erupted in whoops, cries and yodels as they charged back down. A fleeing porcupine hurtled into one of the nets, and in a flash Jandu whacked it on the head with the blunt edge of a machete. Next a net stopped a terrified duiker, which Wasse stabbed with a shortened spear.

After about an hour, the Bayaka emerged carrying three duiker and the porcupine. Wasse said he sometimes hunted monkeys with a bow and poison arrows, but, he went on, "I prefer to hunt with Jandu and my friends." They would share the meat. When we reached the Land Rover, Jandu held up a duiker carcass and burst into song. The other women joined in, accompanying their singing with frenetic hand-clapping. The sound was extraordinary, a high-pitched medley of warbling and yodeling, each woman drifting in and out of the melody for the half-hour it took to return to Mossapola.

"Bayaka music is one of the hidden glories of mankind," Louis Sarno, an American musicologist who has lived with the Bayaka for more than a decade, would tell me later. "It's a very sophisticated form of full, rich-voiced singing based on pentatonic five-part harmonies. But you'd expect that, because music is at the heart of Bayaka life."

Drumming propelled their worship of the much-loved Ejengi, the most powerful of the forest spirits—good and evil—known as *mokoondi*. One day Wasse told me that the great spirit wanted to meet me, and so I joined more than a hundred



MAP: JOHN TOMANIO

PAUL RAFFAELE *is the author of* Among the Cannibals.

Mossapola Pygmies as they gathered soon after dusk, beating drums and chanting. Suddenly there was a hush, and all eyes turned to the jungle. Emerging from the shadows were half a dozen Pygmy men accompanying a creature swathed from top to bottom in strips of russet-hued raffia. It had no features, no limbs, no face. "It's Ejengi," said Wasse, his voice trembling.

At first I was sure it was a Pygmy camouflaged in foliage, but as Ejengi glided across the darkened clearing, the drums beat louder and faster, and as the Pygmies' chanting grew more frenzied, I began to doubt my own eyes. As the spirit began to dance, its dense cloak rippled like water over rocks. The spirit was speechless, but its wishes were communicated by attendants. "Ejengi wants to know why you've come here," shouted a squat man well short of five feet. With Bienvenu translating, I answered that I had come to meet the great spirit.

Apparently persuaded that I was no threat, Ejengi began dancing again, flopping to the ground in a pile of raffia, then leaping up. The music thudded as the chanting gripped my mind, and I spun to the pounding rhythm, unaware of time's passing. As I left for my lodgings, at about 2 a.m., the chanting drifted into the trees until it melted into the sounds of the rain forest night.

I left Dzanga-Sangha reluctantly, happy that I'd glimpsed the Pygmies' way of life but wondering what the future held for them.

AMERICAN SOJOURN

Ota Benga, a Congo Pygmy, was housed—and briefly exhibited—at the Bronx Zoo in 1906. Conflicts with zoo personnel led to his removal, eventually to Lynchburg, Virginia, where he committed suicide in 1916.

Upon my return to the Central African Republic six years later, I found that Bayaka culture had collapsed. Wasse and many of his friends had clearly become alcoholics, drinking a rotgut wine made from fermented palm sap. Outside their hut, Jandu sat with her three children, their stomachs bloated from malnutrition. A local doctor would tell me that Pygmy children typically suffer from many ailments, most commonly ear and chest infections caused by lack of protein. At Mossapola I saw many kids trying to walk on the edges of their soles or heels—trying not to put pressure on spots where chiggers, tiny bug larvae that thrive in the loose soil, had attached themselves.

Wasse gave me a wistful welcoming smile and then suggested we go to the nearby village of Bayanga for palm wine. It was midmorning. At the local bar, a tumbledown shack, several half-sozzled Bantu and Pygmy men greeted him warmly. When I asked when we could go hunting, Wasse sheepishly confided that he had sold his net and bow and arrows long ago. Many Pygmy men there had done the same to get money for palm wine, Bienvenu, my translator again on this trip, would tell me later.

So how do the children get meat to eat? Bienvenu shrugged. "They rarely get to eat meat anymore," he said. "Wasse and Jandu earn a little money from odd jobs, but he mostly spends it on palm wine." The family's daily meals consist mostly of cassava root, which fills the stomach but doesn't provide protein.

When I asked Wasse why he stopped hunting, he shrugged. "When you were here before, the jungle was full of animals," he said. "But the Bantu poachers have plundered the jungle."

Pygmy populations across the Congo Basin suffer "appalling socio-economic conditions and the lack of civil and land rights," according to a recent study conducted for the London-based Rainforest Foundation. They have been pushed from their forests and forced into settlements on Bantu lands, the study says, by eviction from newly established national parks and other protected areas, extensive logging in Cameroon and Congo and continued warfare between government and rebel troops in Congo.

Time and again on this visit, I encountered tales of Bantu prejudice against Pygmies, even among the educated. On my first trip to Mossapola, I had asked Bienvenu if he'd marry a Pygmy woman. "Never," he growled. "I'm not so stupid. They are *bambinga*, not truly humans, they have no civilization."

This belief that Pygmies are less than human is common across equatorial Africa. They "are marginalized by the Bantu," says David Greer, an American primatologist who lived with Pygmies in the Central Africa Republic for nearly a decade. "All the serious village or city leaders are Bantu, and they usually side with other Bantu" in any dispute involving Pygmies.

The Ruwenzori Mountains, also known as the Mountains of the Moon, straddle the Equator to form part of the border between Uganda and Congo. The forests here have long been home to the Batwa, at 80,000 the largest Pygmy tribe; they are also found in Rwanda and Burundi. I visited them this past February.

On the Uganda side of the border, our Land Cruiser trundled over a dirt road high along the flanks of the steep foothills. The hills have long been stripped of trees, but their slopes plunge to verdant valleys—a vast rain forest set aside as a national park.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY

IN THE SPIRIT

To the Pygmies in Mossapola, in the Central African Republic, the most powerful of the spirits that populate their belief system is Ejengi, who is represented as a featureless, limbless figure draped in raffia.

Several hours from Fort Portal, the nearest large population center, we stopped at a Bantu town swarming with people. It was market day, and scores of vendors had spread out their wares—goat carcasses, sarongs, soap, mirrors, scissors. My guide, John Nantume, pointed to a huddle of mud huts about 50 yards away and identified it as the local Pygmy village.

I was surprised that the Pygmies were living so close to their traditional enemies. Mubiru Vincent, of Rural Welfare Improvement for Development, a nongovernmental organization that promotes Batwa welfare, later explained that this group's displacement from the rain forest began in 1993, because of warfare between the Ugandan Army and a rebel group. His organization is now trying to resettle some of the Batwa on land they can farm.

About 30 Batwa sat dull-eyed outside their huts. The smallest adult Pygmy I'd ever seen strode toward me, introduced himself as Nzito and told me that he was "king of the Pygmies here." This, too, surprised me; traditionally, Pygmy households are autonomous, though they cooperate on endeavors such as hunts. (Greer later said that villages usually must coerce individuals into leadership roles.)

Nzito said his people had lived in the rain forest until 1993, when Ugandan "President Museveni forced us from our forests and never gave us compensation or new land. He made us live next to the Bantu on borrowed land."

His clan looked well fed, and Nzito said they regularly eat pork, fish and beef purchased from the nearby market. When I asked how they earn money, he led me to a field behind the huts. It was packed with scores of what looked like marijuana plants. "We use it ourselves and sell it to the Bantu," Nzito said.

The sale and use of marijuana in Uganda is punishable with stiff prison terms, and yet "the police never bother us," Nzito said. "We do what we want without their interference. I think they're afraid we'll cast magic spells on them."

Government officials rarely bring charges against the Batwa generally "because they say they're not like other people and so they're not subject to the law," Penninah Zaninka of the United Organisation for Batwa Development in Uganda, another nongovernmental group, told me later in a meeting in Kampala, the national capital. However, Mubiru Vincent said his group is working to prevent marijuana cultivation.

Because national parks were established in the forests where Nzito and his people used to reside, they cannot live there. "We're training the Batwa how to involve themselves in the nation's political and socioeconomic affairs," Zaninka said, "and basic matters such as hygiene, nutrition, how to get ID cards, grow crops, vote, cook Bantu food, save money and for their children to go to school."

In other words, to become little Bantu, I suggested. Zaninka nodded. "Yes, it's terrible," she said, "but it's the only way they can survive."

Music remains central to Pygmy life—but for members of the Batwa tribe living in Uganda, much has changed. Their leader says they were forced to leave the forest for borrowed land, on which they now grow marijuana.

The Pygmies also face diseases ranging from malaria and cholera to Ebola, the often fatal virus that causes uncontrollable bleeding from every orifice. While I was with the Batwa, an outbreak of the disease in nearby villages killed more than three dozen people. When I asked Nzito if he knew that people nearby were dying of Ebola, he shook his head. "What's Ebola?" he asked.

Cameroon is home to about 40,000 Baka Pygmies, or about one-fifth of Africa's Pygmy population, according to the London-based group Survival International. In Yaoundé, the nation's capital, Samuel Nnah, who directs Pygmy aid programs for a nongovernmental organization called the Centre for Environment and Development (CED), tells me he struggles against a federal government that allows timber companies to log Cameroon's rain forests, driving the Pygmies out. "The Pygmies have to beg land from the Bantu owners, who then claim they own the Baka," Nnah says.

On the road last February from Yaoundé to Djoum, a ramshackle town near Cameroon's southern border, I pass more than a hundred timber trucks, each bearing four or five huge tree trunks to the port of Douala. (Cameroon's 1,000-franc note, worth about $2, bears an engraving of a forklift carrying a huge tree trunk toward a truck.) At Djoum, the CED's provincial coordinator, Joseph Mougou, says he's battling for the human rights of 3,000 Baka who live in 64 villages. "Starting in 1994, the government has forced the Baka from their homes in the primary forest, designating it national parks, but the Baka are allowed to hunt in the secondary forest, mostly rat moles, bush pigs and duiker," Mougou says. "But that's where the government also allows the timber companies free rein to log, and that's destroying the forests."

Forty miles beyond Djoum along a dirt track, passing scores of fully loaded timber trucks, I reach Nkondu, a Pygmy village consisting of about 15 mud huts. Richard Awi, the chief, welcomes me and tells me that the villagers, each carrying empty cane backpacks, are about to leave to forage in the forest. He says that the older children attend a boarding school, but the infants go to the village preschool. "They'll join us later today," anthropologist Mesumbe says.

"Goni! Goni! Goni bule!" Awi shouts. "Let's go to the forest!"

In midafternoon, about 20 children between the ages of 3 and 5 stream unaccompanied into the clearing where their parents are fashioning beehive huts. "Pygmies know the forest from a young age," Mesumbe says, adding that these children followed jungle paths to the clearing.

It is nearing dusk when the three Bantu make their threatening entry into the clearing, demanding that we all return to the roadside village. When the villagers defy Joseph Bikono, the Bantu chief demands 100,000 francs ($200) from me as a bribe to remain with the Pygmies.

Listen to Pygmies of the Ituri forest at Smithsonian.com/pygmies

REMAINS OF THE DAY

Despite logging in the forest, a village set up by Pygmies in southern Cameroon reflects the extent to which they have held on to their ways. At times, a Bantu will enlist their help in illegal elephant hunting.

First I ask him for a receipt, which he provides, and then, with one eye on his machete, I refuse to give him the money. I tell him that he's committed a crime and I threaten to return to Djoum and report him to the police chief, with the receipt as evidence. Bikono's face falls, and the three Bantu shuffle away.

The Pygmies greet their departure with singing and dancing, and they continue almost until midnight. "The Pygmies are the world's most enthusiastic partygoers," David Greer would tell me later. "I've seen them sing and dance for days on end, stopping only for food and sleep."

Over the next three days, I accompany Awi and his clan deeper into the forest to hunt, fish and gather edible plants. In terms of their welfare, the Baka here seem to fit somewhere between the Bayaka of a decade ago in the Central African Republic and the Batwa I had just visited in Uganda. They've abandoned net hunting and put out snares like the Bantu to trap small prey.

Sometimes, Awi says, a Bantu will give them a gun and order them to shoot an elephant. Mesumbe tells me that hunting elephants is illegal in Cameroon and that guns are very rare. "But highly placed policemen and politicians work through village chiefs, giving guns to the Pygmies to kill forest elephants," he says. "They get high prices for the tusks, which are smuggled out to Japan and China." The Pygmies, Awi says, get a portion of the meat and a little cash.

The Baka here have clearly begun accepting Bantu ways. But they cling to the tradition of revering Ejengi. On my final night with them, as light leaches from the sky, women in the clearing chant a welcome to the great rain forest spirit. The men dance wildly to the thud of drums.

As among the Bayaka, no sooner has the sky darkened than Ejengi emerges from the gloom, accompanied by four clansmen. The spirit's raffia strips are ghostly white. It dances with the men for about an hour, and then four little boys are brought before it. Ejengi dances solemnly among them, letting its raffia strips brush their bodies. "Ejengi's touch fills them with power to brave the forest's dangers," Awi says.

Unlike in Mossapola, where Ejengi lent the occasion the exuberance of a nonstop dance party, this ritual seems more somber. Nearing dawn, five teenagers step forward and stand shoulder to shoulder; Ejengi pushes against each of them in turn, trying to knock them off their feet. "Ejengi is testing their power in the forest," Awi tells me. "We Baka face hard times, and our youngsters need all that power to survive as Pygmies." The five young men stand firm.

Later in the day at Djoum, I meet the province administrator, a Bantu named Frédéric Makene Tchalle. "The Pygmies are impossible to understand," he says. "How can they leave their village and tramp into the forest, leaving all their possessions for anyone to steal? They're not like you and I. They're not like any other people."

Capitol Fellow

In 1792, a self-taught architect from Tortola designed America's defining monument, where a new visitor center opens this month

BY FERGUS M. BORDEWICH

William Thornton (opposite) envisioned the Capitol as a structure of noble proportions, a building, he wrote, that "the representatives of a very numerous people would one day require." (This 1852 lithograph depicts extensions to Thornton's House and Senate wings; the additions, authorized in 1851, were not yet constructed.)

IN THE TORRID SUMMER OF 1792, WILLIAM THORNTON, the 33-year-old son of wealthy planters on the Caribbean island of Tortola, labored over a set of architectural drawings. Thornton, who had been trained as a physician but was now trying his hand at architecture, seemed unaware of the oppressive heat. As his sheaf of sketches grew, Thornton's thoughts were focused on the nation that had inspired his endeavor—the fledgling democracy of the United States, whose shores lay more than a thousand miles distant. When he looked up from his desk, Thornton gazed out across the plantations of Pleasant Valley, where slaves toiled in the terraced fields. Since the 1750s, Thornton's Quaker family had prospered on 12-mile-long Tortola (today part of the British Virgin Islands), where sugar, cotton, tobacco and indigo were grown. By the 1790s, export crops carpeted the island's deep valleys and razorback ridges, bringing great fortunes to many and guilt to a few, including Thornton, who abhorred slavery.

As Thornton refined his drawings, the air was thick with the pungent scent of sugar cane being refined into molasses and rum; the cooing of mountain doves mingled with the thud of waves onshore in nearby Sea Cow Bay. Gradually, a magnificent building—the United States Capitol—took shape on Thornton's papers. The structure, he believed, would rise as a shrine to republican government. (On December 2, 2008, the most recent addition to the nation's defining monument—the $621 million Capitol Visitor Center—will be inaugurated when it opens to the public after six years of construction.)

"I have made my drawings with the greatest accuracy, and the most minute attention," Thorn-

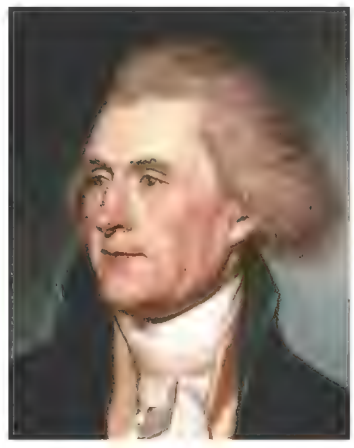
ton wrote to federal commissioners charged with selecting a design from more than a dozen submissions. "In an affair of so much consequence to the dignity of the United States," he added, it was his hope that "you will not be hasty in deciding."

SEVERAL MONTHS EARLIER, in the spring of 1792, the government of President George Washington had begun soliciting designs for the Capitol. The intention was to create a structure that would embody the lofty ideals of the new nation and serve as a defining landmark in a new federal city that was to rise on the banks of the Potomac River. According to historian Kenneth R. Bowling of George Washington University, our first president well understood the significance of the national capital's location. By siting the city "in the Middle States," says Bowling, President Washington envisioned that future city would play "a fundamental role in the survival of the Union, by uniting the North, South and West." The Capitol building, Bowling adds, would serve as the city's political anchor—a physical counterpart to the Constitution and a kind of temple to the secular religion of republican government.

Heated competition for the site of the capital city had raged for years, reaching its height during the First Federal Congress, which met in New York from 1789 to 1790. Fierce backroom negotiations went on for months. In the end, factions advocating for Philadelphia and New York were outmaneuvered by those who argued for a location on the Potomac River, equidistant between North and South, easily defended and naturally attractive to international trade. Southerners also feared that establishing a capital in the North—where those in bondage were already being emancipated—would help to undermine slavery. (As a conciliatory gesture to Pennsylvania, Philadelphia was named the temporary capital until Congress could take up residence on the Potomac in 1800.)

By mid-1792, the "city" existed as little more than a speculative if magnificent plan, mapped out by French-born engineer Pierre Charles L'Enfant. (Washington had first met L'Enfant at Valley Forge during the terrible winter of 1777-78, when L'Enfant served under the commander in chief.) Only a handful of streets had been laid out, designated by surveyor's stakes and lines of felled trees radiating across landowners' forests and pastures. Washington and his allies wanted buildings that would embody the nation's hoped-for future. "In our Idea the Capitol ought in point of prosperity to be on a grand Scale, and that a Republic especially ought not to be sparing of expenses on an Edifice for such purposes," wrote the three recently appointed commissioners overseeing creation of the new capital city.

The commissioners also solicited designs for an official residence to be known as the President's House. The winners would receive $500 and, in the case of the Capitol, a city lot as well. For the President's House, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, the administration's resident aesthete, had expressed a desire for something "modern," perhaps, he suggested, resembling the Louvre or another Parisian landmark. For the Capitol, however, Jefferson had in mind the architecture of classical Rome: "I should prefer the adoption of some of the models of antiquity, which have had the approbation of thousands of years."



"Jefferson didn't want to take any chances with the Capitol. Basically, he wanted the Europeans to stop laughing at us."

Jefferson (above: in 1791) designed a plan for the Capitol, but never submitted drawings. He believed it should be based on Roman "models of antiquity."

Indeed, it was Jefferson who had come up with the name Capitol Hill, consciously invoking the famous temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill in ancient Rome. (The tract of land slated for the Capitol had been known as Jenkins Hill.) Jefferson was also appropriating the mantle of the Roman Republic, with its political freedoms and popular government. "Jefferson didn't want to take any chances with the Capitol and the public buildings," says William C. Allen, architectural historian in the Office of the Architect at the U.S. Capitol. "He wanted them based on buildings that were already famous and admired. Basically, he wanted the Europeans to stop laughing at us."

The contest for the President's House was quickly decided and resulted in the appointment of James Hoban, an Irish-born architect from Charleston, South Carolina. The competition for the Capitol, however, presented a host of problems. Submissions began to arrive in July 1792. One design featured the statue of a gigantic bird, reminiscent of a turkey, perched atop a cupola. Another plan evoked a county courthouse; a third resembled an army barracks. Jefferson himself drew a plan, which he never submitted, that he based on the circular, second-century A.D. Pantheon, the most renowned surviving temple in Rome; he incorporated oval chambers under the dome, intended to house the three branches of government. Washington did not hide his disappointment in the submissions. "If none more elegant than these should appear . . . the exhibition of architecture will be a very dull one indeed," he said.

Writer **FERGUS M. BORDEWICH***'s most recent book is* Washington: The Making of the American Capital.

GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK; PP. 78-79 LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; P. 79 REDWOOD LIBRARY AND ATHENAEUM, NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND

Washington and Jefferson reluctantly focused on the only plan from a professional architect, French-born Étienne (Stephen) Sulpice Hallet, whose ornate and monumental scheme, calling for multiple exterior and interior sculptures, became known as the "fancy piece." Hallet had been at work for months, refining his design, when, in January, a late entry appeared. The deadline had come—and gone—six months before, but Thornton had nonetheless requested, and received, permission to submit his plan.

William Thornton was not a man to be easily dismissed. The affable Thornton—"full of hope, and of a cheerful temper," as his wife, Anna Maria, described him—was a nonconformist by temperament, a man who favored lace-trimmed garments that belied his austere Quaker origins. He was already one of the most celebrated figures of his time, a polymath and inventor. An acquaintance, jurist William Cranch, who would become chief justice of the D.C. federal court, said Thornton was "a little genius at everything." Born on Tortola in 1759, he was sent at age 5 to be educated in England. After completing medical studies at Scotland's University of Edinburgh in his 20s, Thornton began corresponding with the astronomer William Herschel. The young medical student's connections also resulted in an introduction, in Paris, to Benjamin Franklin, the American ambassador to France. Thornton's range of interests encompassed natural history, botany, mechanics, linguistics, architecture, government and—in another departure from the sober Quakers—horse racing. He had already helped to finance development of a steamboat and to design its boiler; invented a steam-operated gun; and proposed a "speaking organ to be worked by water or steam and to preach to the whole city." He was the author of a treatise on comets. He also advocated ending bondage by resettling emancipated slaves in Africa, where Thornton envisioned a colony characterized by "the support of places of worship, of schools, and societies for the encouragement of science" and a legal system based on the Anglo-American model. (His ideas would ultimately influence the founding of Liberia.)

In 1786, Thornton embarked for the United States, where, he believed, "virtue and talents were alone sufficient to elevate to office, instead of hereditary rights derived from men whose meanness or vices were the prin-

When President Washington (below) laid the Capitol cornerstone on September 18, 1793, he presided over an event replete with "music playing . . . and spectators rejoicing." The North Wing (right) was finished in 1800.

GRANGER COLLECTION, NEW YORK; PAINTING BY JOHN MELIUS, 1992, COURTESY OF SUPREME COUNCIL, A.A.S.R.-S.J.

cipal causes of their grandeur." The young physician, who would become a citizen in 1788, eventually settled in Philadelphia, where he set up a practice. Soon, he would count James Madison among his friends. (He and Madison lived in the same Philadelphia lodging house during the Constitutional Convention.)

Even far from home, Thornton was preoccupied with liberating his family's slaves. "I am induced to render free all that I am possessed of, by the dictates of conscience, and the uncommon desire I have to see them a happy people," he wrote to a friend in England. "My inclination is however in some degree counter to the prejudices of my parents—prejudices absorbed by a West Indian education, and which, by the continued habit of slavery, are now become shackles to the mind." In 1790, he departed Philadelphia for Tortola. During two frustrating years on the island, Thornton met with intractable opposition from his mother and stepfather, and from local authorities, who regarded him as a dangerous revolutionary whose actions, they feared, would lead to slave rebellion and economic ruin.

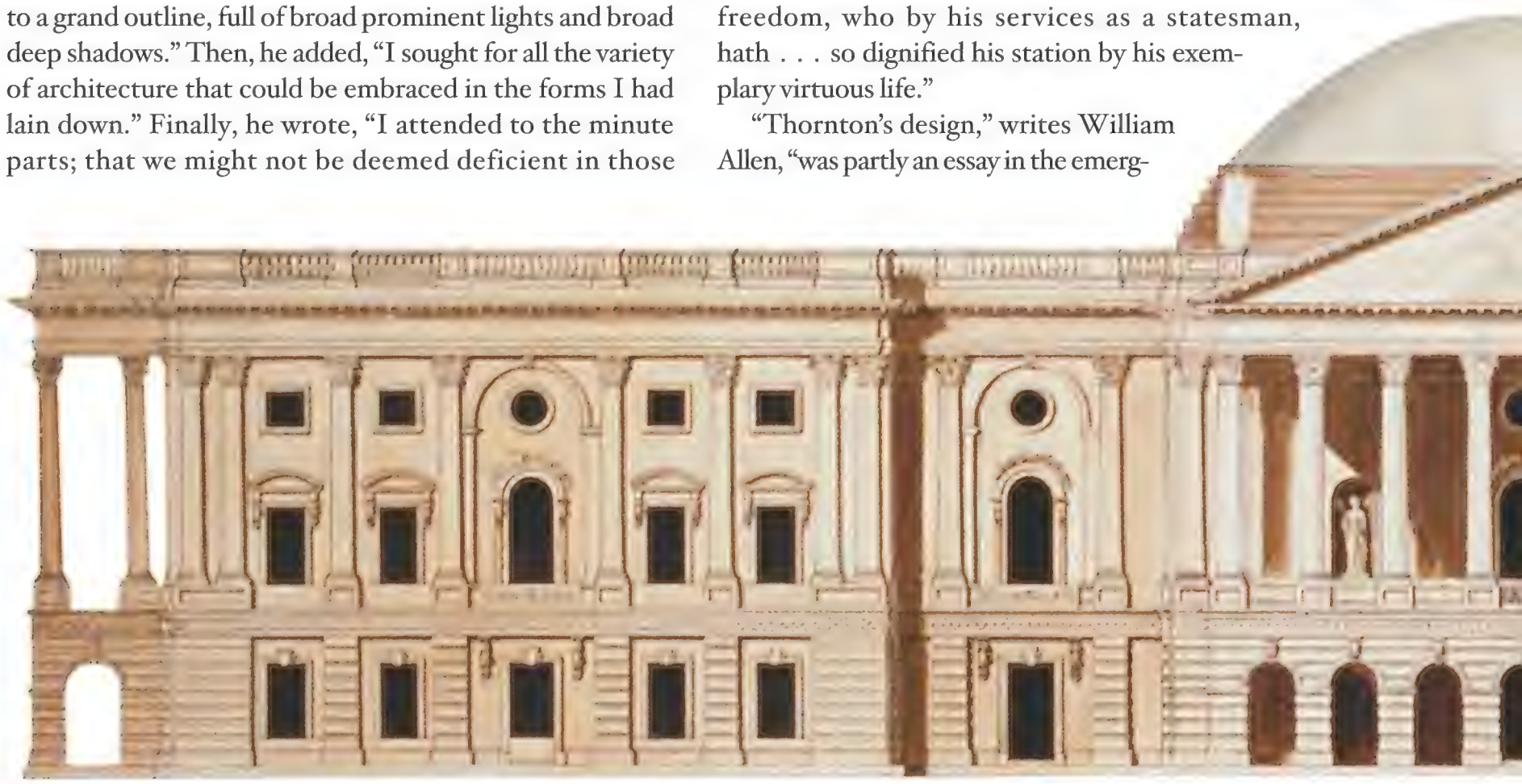
It was during this time on Tortola that Thornton learned of the Capitol design competition; he immersed himself in the project with a zeal bordering on passion. "First I thought of the amazing extent of our country, and of the apartments that the representatives of a very numerous people would one day require," he would later recount the genesis of his design to a British friend, Anthony Fothergill. "Secondly I consulted the dignity of appearance, and made minutiae give way to a grand outline, full of broad prominent lights and broad deep shadows." Then, he added, "I sought for all the variety of architecture that could be embraced in the forms I had lain down." Finally, he wrote, "I attended to the minute parts; that we might not be deemed deficient in those touches which a painter would require in the finishing."

Thornton had no formal training in architecture; he took his inspiration largely from examples in books. The design that he drafted was essentially a huge Georgian mansion, its entrance a six-columned portico. In November 1792, Thornton hand-carried that original plan to Philadelphia, still the seat of government. There, he learned of the earlier uninspired entries, the commissioners' request for new drawings from Hallet and of Jefferson's particular admiration for the Pantheon. He also discovered that President Washington had decided that the proposed capitol should incorporate a presidential apartment, as well as a dome—that feature, it was believed, would impart a special grandeur, rendering the structure unique in North America.

> Thornton "redefined the sacred element of the temple, enshrining the lawmaking process upon which the success of the new republic depended."

In January 1793, Thornton produced a second plan, one which represented a quantum leap in scale and originality. The building would, by American standards, be huge: 352 feet in length, three and a half times longer than Independence Hall in Philadelphia and far more elaborate than anything attempted in the Western Hemisphere. Symmetrically proportioned wings to the north and south provided quarters for the Senate and House of Representatives. The building's focal point was a majestically domed rotunda fronted by a Corinthian portico, its 12 columns set on a one-story gallery. Inside the rotunda, Thornton envisioned a marble equestrian statue of George Washington, "who by his military achievements and noble exertions hath so eminently aided his country in obtaining freedom, who by his services as a statesman, hath . . . so dignified his station by his exemplary virtuous life."

"Thornton's design," writes William Allen, "was partly an essay in the emerg-



ing neoclassical style and partly an orthodox, high-style Georgian building." The dome and portico, he adds, "were both reminiscent of . . . the Pantheon. Thornton's adaptation of the Pantheon linked the new republic to the classical world and to its ideas of civic virtue and self-government." (Today, photocopies of Thornton's hand-drawn plans are displayed in the Capitol.)

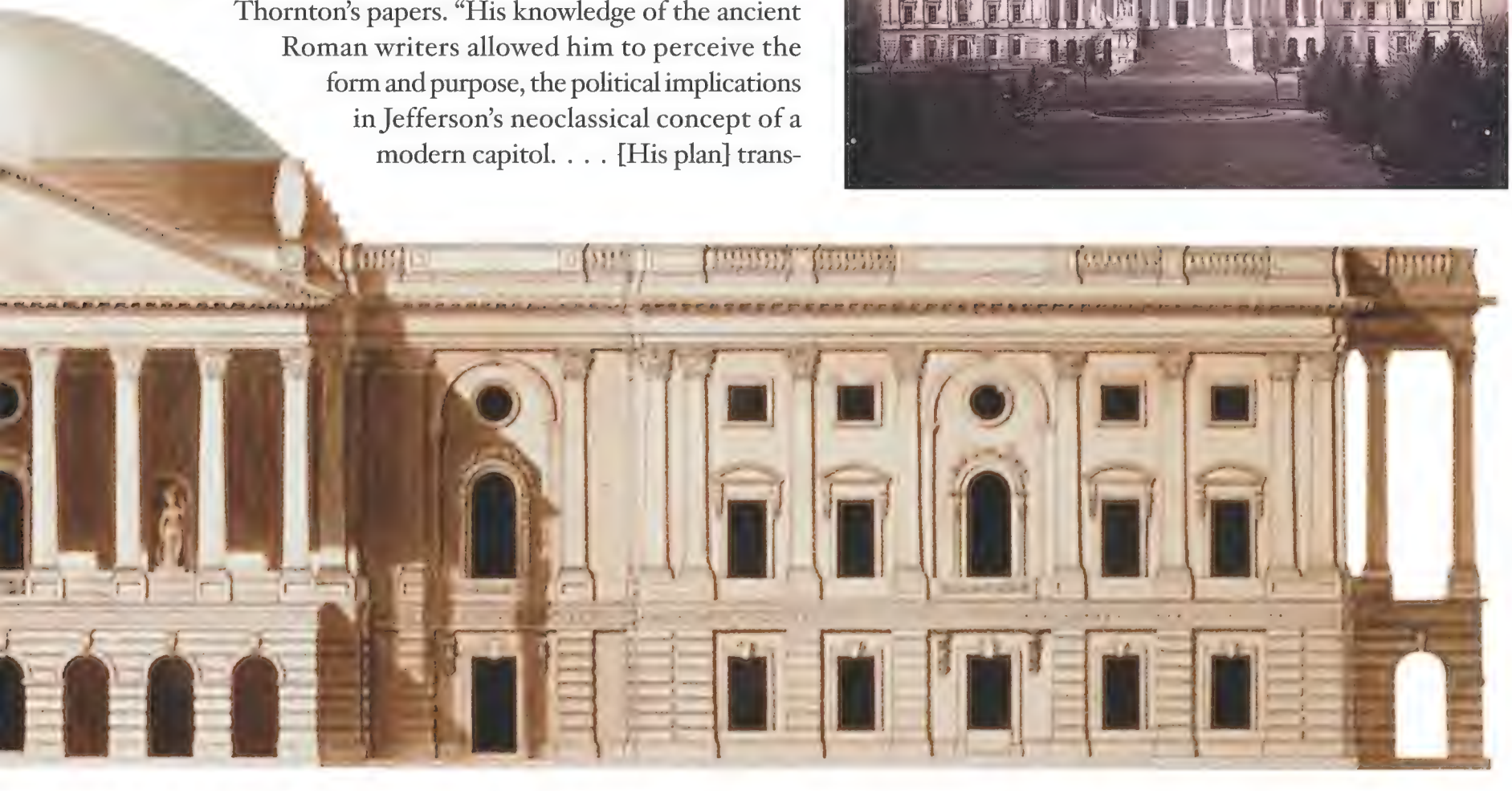
Thornton's design was fully realized: he even imagined a series of statues incorporating a uniquely American iconography. Images including buffalo, elk and Indians would accompany figures from the ancient world, Hercules and Atlas: thus, emblems of the new nation's wilderness and westward expansion would be wedded to classical symbolism. Thornton's design overwhelmed George Washington with its "grandeur, simplicity, and beauty."

By early February, Jefferson made it clear to federal commissioners that Thornton's design enjoyed official favor, noting that it "so captivated the eyes and judgment of all as to leave no doubt you will prefer it." On April 5, the commissioners informed Thornton that "the President has given his formal approbation of your plan." Thornton's reaction to the news is unrecorded. However, he quickly got down to work. Five days later, he submitted a minutely detailed report, outlining plans for everything from placement of windows and water closets to committee rooms and vestibules. He proposed, too, a statue of Atlas holding up Earth, which, Thornton noted, "has an allusion to the members assembled in this house bearing the whole weight of government." (The sculpture would never be commissioned.)

Thornton "succeeded, where others with practical experience had failed, because he grasped and was able to delineate the fundamental idea of the building," writes C. M. Harris, an independent historian who is the editor of Thornton's papers. "His knowledge of the ancient Roman writers allowed him to perceive the form and purpose, the political implications in Jefferson's neoclassical concept of a modern capitol. . . . [His plan] translated the Constitution into architectural form, creating a unique American building type." Thornton, adds Harris, "redefined the sacred element of the temple, enshrining the lawmaking process upon which the success of the new republic depended, rather than any god or the authority of the state."

The design, however brilliant, was not perfect. Although the Capitol's exterior was magnificent, Thornton lacked a crucial skill: the architect's ability to picture an interior in three dimensions. Thus, when professional builders examined his plans later in 1793, it became clear that its columns were spaced too widely to support architraves and that the staircases lacked sufficient headroom. The conference room's interior colonnade, Jefferson objected, had "an ill effect to the eye, and will obstruct the view of the members: and if taken away, the ceiling is too wide to support itself." Key sections of the building lacked sufficient light and air. The president's of-

Thornton's design (bottom) was conceived on a grand scale: at 352 feet in length, his Capitol would constitute a structure more elaborate than anything previously attempted in the Western Hemisphere; President Washington was dazzled by the plan's "grandeur, simplicity, and beauty." By 1846, the completed Capitol (below), though modified from the original, stood very much as Thornton had envisioned it.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS; PP. 82-83 CORBIS

fice had no ventilation at all, while the Senate chamber was allotted only three windows. "Had Thornton's plan been followed, the Senate would have suffocated," says Allen.

The task of remedying the problems was assigned to none other than, as the commissioners put it, "poor Hallet," whose own design had just been rejected. Hallet's feelings, Washington wrote with some embarrassment, would have to be "sa[l]ved and soothed to prepare him for the prospect that the dr's plan will be preferred to his." Although Hallet did as he was bidden, he continued to lobby, unsuccessfully, for his own design to replace Thornton's.

ON SEPTEMBER 18, 1793, a scene of nearly medieval pageantry unfolded in the new federal city as the moment came to lay the Capitol's cornerstone. President Washington was accompanied by his brotherhood from local Masonic lodges. (The group's origins lay in the workmen's guilds of the Middle Ages, which by the 18th century had evolved into an elite fraternity that promoted the Enlightenment ideals of rationality and fellowship. During the Revolutionary War, Freemasonry had served as a powerful bonding force among officers of the Continental Army.) Washington and his compatriots marched resplendent in regalia of satin aprons, badges and sashes, accompanied by a military band and soldiers of the Alexandria Volunteer Artillery. One dignitary carried the Bible on a satin cushion, another a ceremonial sword. A local newspaper, the *Columbia Mirror and Alexandria Gazette*, reported "music playing, drums beating, colors flying, and spectators rejoicing." Surveyors and federal officials, stonecutters and carpenters, along with prominent citizens, picked their way around potholes and tree stumps to Capitol Hill, along the route of what one day would be Pennsylvania Avenue. There, artillerymen unlimbered their guns and fired a cannonade that echoed resoundingly. Washington clambered into a trench where he laid the cornerstone. After another 15-round cannonade, "The whole company," reported the *Mirror and Gazette*, feasted on "an ox of 500 pounds' weight."

Crowning achievement: the Capitol dome has undergone a series of alterations. From top: in 1856, after the 1824 dome was removed; the new dome under construction, 1859; today's dome, completed in 1863 (in a 1906 view).

THE CAPITOL HAD BEEN SCHEDULED for completion by 1800. However, progress was hampered by incompetent management, contentious debates over the federal city's future, labor disputes and shoddy construction. In 1795, as a result of slipshod work, the building's foundation collapsed; not long afterward, a foreman absconded with $2,000 in workers' salaries. Funding presented even bigger obstacles. The federal government initially had refused to appropriate public revenues for development of the capital city, insisting that money be raised through sales of municipal land, a system that failed repeatedly. Finally, in 1802, Congress grudgingly agreed to pay the project's debt from the Treasury.

Despite the setbacks, the Capitol's North Wing, housing the Senate's semielliptical chamber, was completed, if only barely, in time for the arrival of Congress from Philadelphia in 1800. (For the time being, the House of Representatives would meet in the second-floor library.) When members of Congress entered the building that November to hear President John Adams proclaim the official installation of the government in Washington, D.C., the scent of newly cut lumber and fresh paint hung in the air.

It would take 33 years to complete the building that Thornton had begun to envision on Tortola. As the structure was altered and enlarged over time, Thornton's name and his memory would be submerged beneath the work of others. The Capitol's South Wing was completed by architect Benjamin Latrobe in 1811. The rotunda and portico were at last finished in 1826, under architect Charles Bulfinch. Major expansions, including new House and Senate wings, altered the Capitol in the 1850s and 1860s (when Bulfinch's teacup-shaped dome also was replaced by the towering cast-iron dome punctuating the city's skyline today.)

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL; HULTON-DEUTSCH COLLECTION / CORBIS; LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Explore the new Capitol Visitor Center at www.Smithsonian.com/capitol

However, elements of Thornton's design remain, including the original western facade of the wings, the stately Law Library Door at the southeast corner of the old North Wing and much of the eastern facade, now part of a corridor behind the East Front extension, erected between 1958 and 1961. The visitor center, plagued by delays and cost overruns, surveys the Capitol's history, incorporating interactive exhibits and a live feed from House and Senate chambers when Congress is in session.

Thornton's Capitol was the greatest design achievement of the early republic. "Thornton's stroke of genius was to put wings on the Pantheon, and to make them the working parts of the building, and the Pantheon a ceremonial part," says Allen. "He established for all time what the Capitol was to be. Everything that came later had to follow Thornton's design." His creation, Allen notes, would also inspire nearly every state capitol erected throughout the 19th century, most notably in North Carolina, Alabama and Mississippi. "By separating the wings, he also physically expressed the bicameral form of the government," Allen adds. "He got everything right at once: the size, the degree of grandeur, the Anglo-American feel. It was the perfect recipe. Some of the alternative submissions had too much salt, so to speak, others too much pepper. Others were overbaked. Thornton's was just right. It was a flash of genius."

Thornton lived the rest of his life in his adopted city, which, with characteristic effusiveness, he compared to Constantinople, boasting, "We are approaching a state which will, I doubt not, be the envy of the world." In 1794, President Washington appointed him to the three-man board of commissioners that oversaw the continuing development of the federal city. After the board was abolished in 1802, President Jefferson named him the head of the U.S. Patent Office, a position he held until his death, at age 68, in 1828. Thornton also designed several additional buildings that stand in Washington, including Octagon House (1798-1800), a couple of blocks from the White House and now a museum operated by the American Architectural Foundation, and Tudor Place (1816), a Georgetown mansion originally the home of the Peter family and now a museum as well.

Although Thornton's commitment to the emancipation of slaves diminished in the capital's proslavery climate, his enthusiasm for republican government never waned. He became an outspoken advocate of Greek independence and of democratic revolution in South America. To the end of his days, Thornton was consumed by a passionate desire to leave his mark on the world. He sensed, and feared, the ephemeral nature of fame. "I cannot rest when I think what I might have done, and reflect on what only I have done," he wrote to his cousin John Coakley Lettsom in January 1795. "I sicken at the idea, and lament the loss of time—God grant grace to me, and direct me to be, if possible, a benefactor to man. . . . I must do more than I have ever yet done, or my name too will die."

Even as the Capitol has evolved (the new visitor center's double entrance is at the center of the image below), Thornton's design still defines the building's form. "He established for all time what the Capitol was to be," says architectural historian William Allen.

ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

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PRESENCE OF MIND

Woman, Interrupted

After 44 years, Mary Pinchot Meyer's death remains a mystery. But it's her life that holds more interest now **BY LANCE MORROW**

ON A PERFECT OCTOBER DAY in 1964, Mary Pinchot Meyer—mistress of John Kennedy, friend of Jackie Kennedy and ex-wife of a top CIA man, Cord Meyer—was murdered in the rarefied Washington precinct of Georgetown.

It was half past noon. I was a cub reporter on the *Washington Star*. In the classically scruffy pressroom at police headquarters, I heard the radio dispatcher direct Cruisers 25 and 26 (which I recognized as homicide squad cars) to the C&O Canal. I alerted the city desk, drove to Georgetown, ran to the wall overlooking the canal and saw a body curled up in a ball on the towpath. Two men who had been changing a tire nearby told me they had heard a shot . . . a cry for help . . . a second shot . . . and had called the police.

There were no cops with the body yet. But in the distance, between the Potomac and the canal, I saw the lines of the police dragnet closing in along the towpath from west and east.

Because I had played there as a boy, I knew there was a tunnel under the canal a few hundred yards west of where the body lay. I knew the killer was still at large and might also have known about it. But the tunnel would be the quickest way for me to get to the other side of the canal, to where the body was. I pushed aside the vines at the tunnel entrance and hurried

Meyer (left) had embraced the 1960s before she met her fate along the C&O Canal (above). Her affair with JFK came out after her death.

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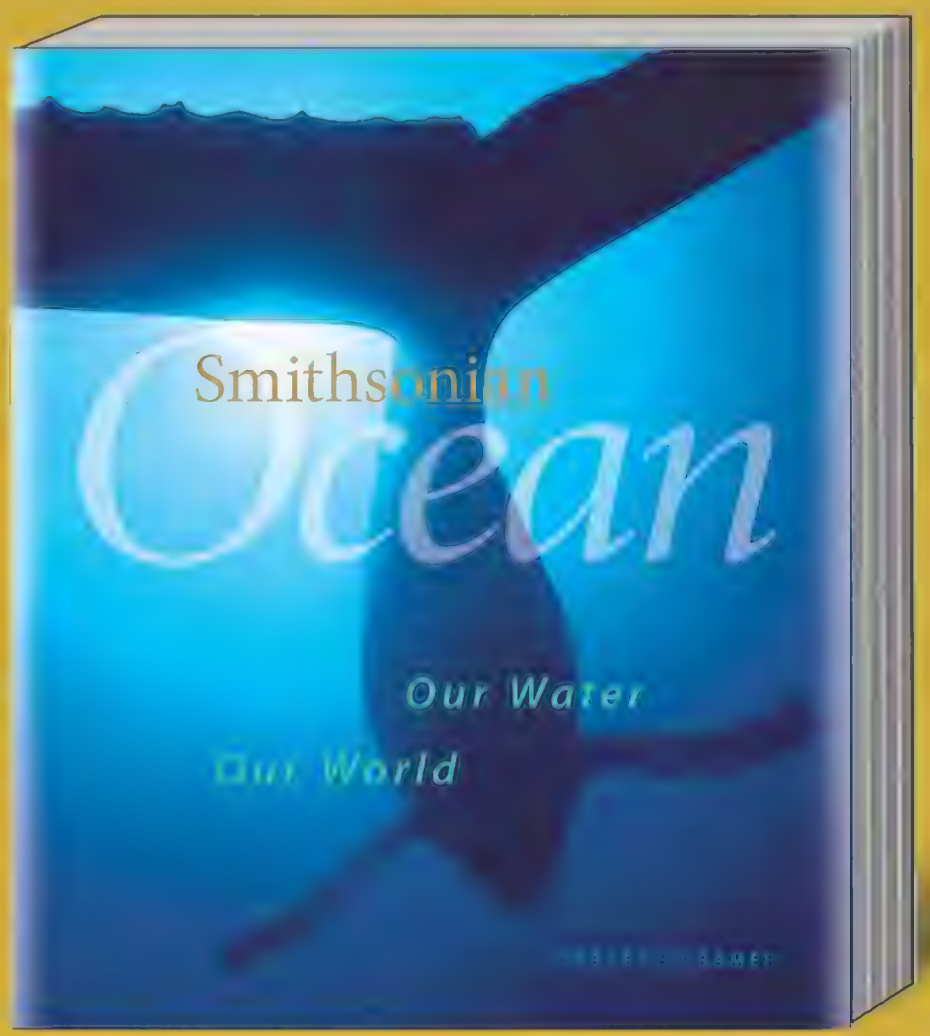

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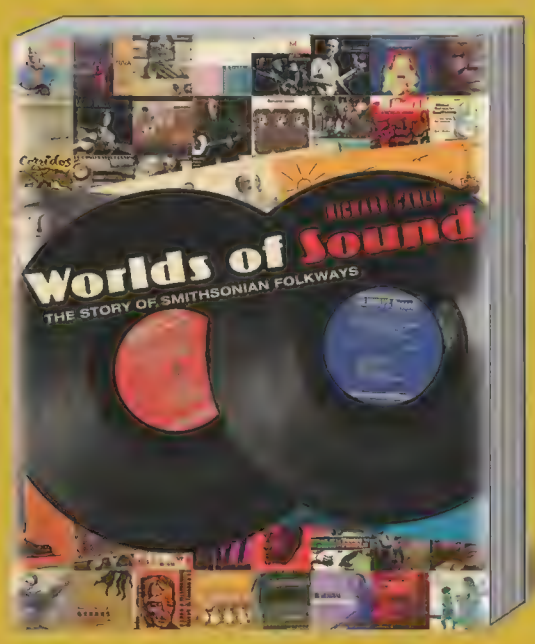

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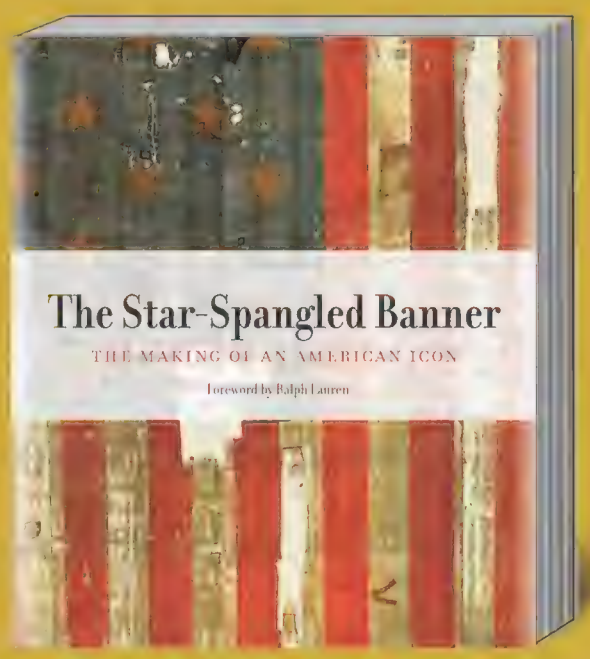

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Mary's marriage to Cord Meyer would reflect Washington's gender dramas.

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through, heart pounding, and burst into sunshine on the other side. I approached the body of Mary Pinchot Meyer and stood over it, weirdly and awkwardly alone as the police advanced from either direction.

She lay on her side, as if sleeping. She was dressed in a light blue fluffy angora sweater, pedal pushers and sneakers. She was an artist and had a studio nearby, and she had gone out for her usual lunchtime walk. I saw a neat and almost bloodless bullet hole in her head. She looked entirely peaceful, vaguely patrician. She had an air of Georgetown. I stood there with her until the police came up. I held a reporter's notebook. The cops from the homicide squad knew me. They told me to move away.

The police found a man in the woods down by the river. His name was Ray Crump Jr., and he was black. His clothes were wet. He had cut his hand. He gave the police a couple of stories. He said he had been fishing and had dropped his fishing pole and gone into the river to retrieve it; he said he had been drinking beer and went to sleep and fell in. The two men who had heard the shots told the police they had seen Crump standing over the body. He was booked for homicide. The police found his jacket and cap in the river. His fishing rod was in a closet where he lived, on the other side of the city. The murder weapon was never found. It may still be at the bottom of the river. Crump eventually was acquitted for lack of evidence.

THAT OCTOBER DAY rests in a corner of my mind, a vivid and mysterious curio. I pick it up from time to time and examine it in different lights. I have not figured it out, though I have theories. I thought of Mary Meyer's murder again during the presidential campaign, when the drama of a black man, Barack Obama, and two women, Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin, in a race for the top places in American government took me back over a distance of time to a city that was then, for black people and for women, a different universe.

When Mary Meyer died, no one knew about her affair with John Kennedy, or about her ex-husband's

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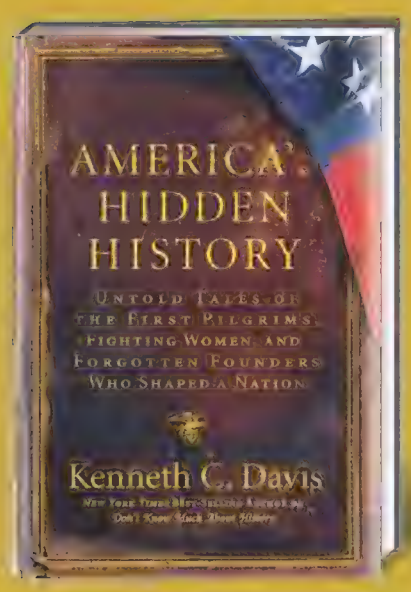
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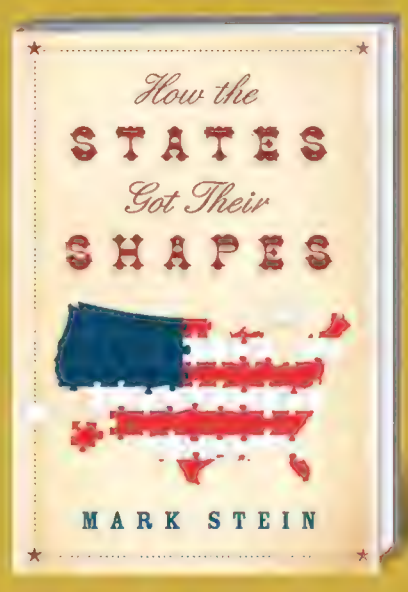

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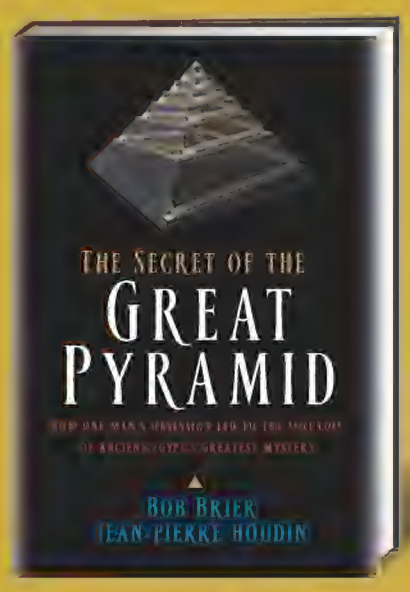

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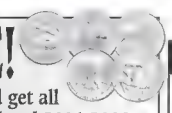

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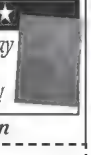

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job managing the CIA's clandestine services. In newspapers, Cord Meyer—wounded World War II hero and young idealist who helped found the United World Federalists—was identified as an author, with a vague government job. The papers noted that Mary, 43, was a Georgetown artist, born to a wealthy Pennsylvania family, daughter of Amos Pinchot, the Progressive lawyer, and niece of Gifford Pinchot, the conservationist and Teddy Roosevelt's chief forester. Her younger sister, Tony, was married to Ben Bradlee, then of *Newsweek*, later of the *Washington Post*. It was Bradlee who identified the body at the morgue.

Then other news supervened. There was a presidential election coming, Johnson (who had recently signed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution) versus Goldwater (the warmonger, according to the 1964 narrative). Khrushchev was deposed. China exploded its first nuclear bomb.

But over the years, sensational fragments of the story (JFK, CIA) turned up. Inevitably, conspiracy theories emerged. Who killed Mary—really? Was Ray Crump set up? By whom? Why?

As real evidence went mute, the public imagination worked on two possible narratives.

The first was what might be called the Oliver Stone Solution—that is, to posit a conspiracy elaborate enough and sinister enough to do imaginative and, as it were, cinematic justice to the murder of a woman with such suggestive, powerful connections. The journalist Nina Burleigh sifted through plot possibilities in her excellent book on Meyer, *A Very Private Woman* (1998), and quoted the critic Morris Dickstein on the temptations of the 1960s' paranoid style—"a sense at once joyful and threatening that things are not what they seem, that reality is mysteriously overorganized and can be decoded if only we attend to the hundred little hints and byways that beckon to us."

Thus in the Stone Solution, popular on the Internet, Meyer was done in by "the same sons of bitches that killed John F. Kennedy," as one writer, C. David Heymann, claims he was told by the

dying Cord Meyer. Another writer, Leo Damore (also dead), argued that Crump "was the perfect patsy, better even than Lee Harvey Oswald. Mary Meyer was killed by a well-trained professional hit man, very likely somebody connected to the CIA"—the idea being that she knew "too much for her own good."

The second scenario might be called the Richard Wright Solution, after the author of the 1940 novel *Native Son*, whose protagonist, Bigger Thomas, is tormented by the oppressions of poverty and racism: "To Bigger and his kind white people were not really people; they were a sort of great natural force, like a stormy sky looming overhead, or like a deep swirling river stretching suddenly at one's feet in the dark." In this scenario, Crump one day left his home in black Southeast Washington, crossed the segregated city, passing the Capitol and the White House, and entered white Georgetown. And there—on the home turf of mandarins, of Joe Alsop and Kay Graham and Scotty Reston and Dean Acheson—his path intersected for a moment with Mary Meyer's.

You could choose your movie. Solution One drew Mary Meyer into the world of James Ellroy, the grassy knoll, Jim Garrison, the Mafia, Judith Exner, Fair Play for Cuba, Operation Mongoose and so on. Solution Two inserted Mary Meyer by accident into an entirely different story: the primal drama of race in America.

The Oliver Stone Solution regards Ray Crump as misdirection. The Richard Wright Solution regards the conspiracy as misdirection. I don't buy either—the conspiracy theory smacks of the Oedipal paranoid (fantasies of hidden plots by sinister super-elders), and the other doesn't cover the particularities of this act. (At the same time, given what the two witnesses said, and given Crump's alcoholism and mental instability and criminal record before and after the murder, I believe the jury erred in acquitting him.)

In retrospect, the case suggests other movies, ones from Mary Meyer's youth—like the intricate murder puzzle

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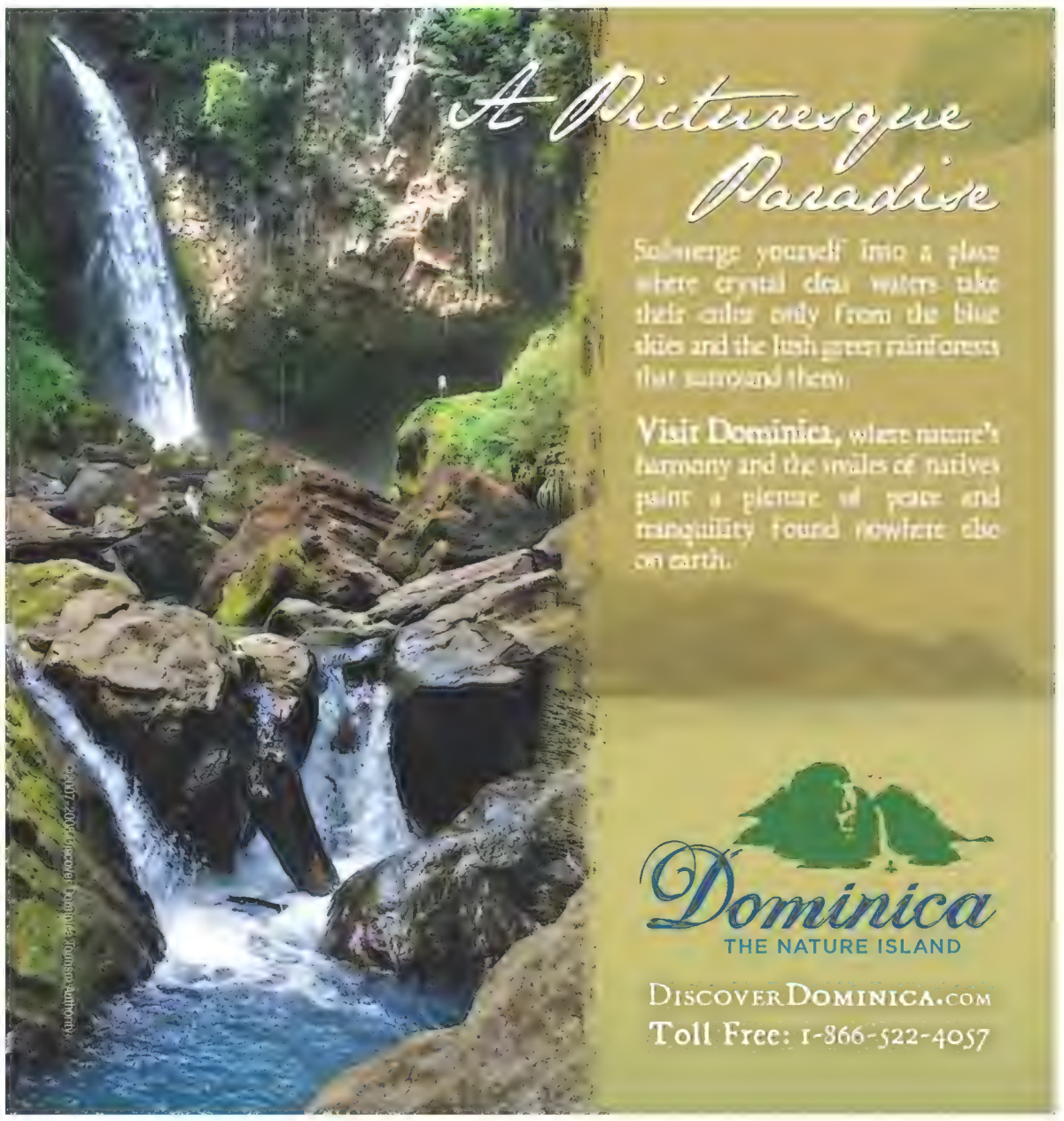
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It was a masculine city, even for working women (such as Elise Morrow, in 1946).

Laura, or else that Greatest Generation favorite *Casablanca*, with its throbbing moral choices, worked out over endless cigarettes and sacramental booze.

Sometimes, the mere whodunit questions about Mary Meyer's murder seem mechanical. Especially today, in the context of Hillary Clinton, Sarah Palin, Condoleezza Rice, Nancy Pelosi and others who have enlarged the professional horizons of women, the memory of Washington at the earlier time returns with a certain sadness and sense of waste.

IT IS LESS THE MYSTERY of Mary Meyer's death—I am used to that—than something complicated and poignant and elusive in her life that I have come to find moving.

I grew up watching my mother and a number of women of her generation (which included Mary Meyer, born two years before my mother) struggling, in different ways, with the dilemmas of marriage and children and power and alcohol and ambition in a city that was politically charged, noisy with controversy and at the same time stunningly dull. There was hardly a decent restaurant in town, and not much theater beyond the pedestrian National Theatre down by the Treasury Department. (The National offered visiting Bulgarian dance troupes, dancing dogs, perhaps, and an occasional Broadway roadshow.) Sunday

LANCE MORROW COLLECTION

afternoons seemed to go on for months. Washington was hermetically segregated, ideologically overtriumphant, militarily overpowerful . . . yet also overanxious, overboozed, overstretched.

You saw those traits in Georgetown, which seemed to house half the hierarchy of the State Department and the CIA and the journalistic establishment, many of whom gathered for argumentative high-policy dinner parties on Sunday nights ("the Sunday Night Drunk," as one regular called it). Men from Wild Bill Donovan's old OSS and Allen Dulles' CIA and other cold warriors out of Groton and Yale and Princeton would drink too much and shout and might even, toward one or two in the morning, go for one another's throats. They would send a note of apology next day. The expensively educated had styles of cluelessness and overcompensating machismo that would come to grief at the Bay of Pigs.

Mary Meyer was a 1940s-50s American housewife (postwar marriage, suburbs and children in the Eisenhower years) who plunged headlong (with an aristocratically concealed recklessness that was a trademark of hers) into the '60s and into her private new frontiers. After her divorce, she had moved to Georgetown, become an artist (and longtime lover of the painter Kenneth Noland), experimented with drugs (in part, it seems, under the tutelage of Timothy Leary, who, in a book many years later, claimed that Mary wanted to turn Camelot into a peace-and-love acid trip). Mary climbed the back stairs of the White House to have her affair. Then she died on the towpath—woman interrupted. By unhappy irony, the questing, independent woman would be known after her death not as an artist, but as Kennedy's girlfriend.

Washington was a small town. My parents' cast of characters and Mary Meyer's cast of characters overlapped sometimes. I played touch football on Saturday mornings at the playground field at 34th and Q streets, near Mary's house, with Bobby Kennedy and his cronies, with Byron "Whizzer" White and others. John Kennedy sometimes came to watch, leaning on crutches.

It was a masculine town. Joe Kennedy was known to remark that if his daughter Eunice had been born male, "she would have been a hell of a politician." Bobby Kennedy became furious in a football game when his wife, Ethel, about six months pregnant, dropped a pass. The drama of the transformation of Washington women began with gunshots to the head—Philip Graham's suicide in August 1963; John Kennedy's assassination in November 1963; Mary Meyer's death in October 1964. Katharine Graham, the formerly suppressed wife (mousewife/housewife, by her own account) of Philip, took over his job running the *Washington Post* after his death. She became a national force. It was Kay Graham who decisively ended the after-dinner ritual of having the ladies go off by themselves to powder noses and discuss women's things while the men had coffee and cognac and talked about the cold war. She simply balked at this one night at Joseph Alsop's.

The Washington gender dramas had been going on for a long time, with different casts and styles. Kay Graham had an interesting predecessor, Cissy Patterson, editor of Hearst's old *Washington Herald* in the '30s and '40s. She was a stylish drinker, imaginative newspaper editor and occasional hell-raiser, an heiress of the McCormick-Medill-Patterson newspaper dynasty who in her heedless youth had gone off and married a Polish count. Cissy once said most men thought of women editors as Samuel Johnson had famously regarded women preachers: "Sir, a woman preaching is like a dog's walking on his hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."

But women like my mother, or like Cissy Patterson, or like Mary Meyer, enjoyed the surprise and the delight that they were able to elicit in men—a little like the effect Marlene Dietrich achieved in *Blonde Venus* when she came on stage dressed in a gorilla suit and slowly removed the head to reveal her taunting, spectacular self. They knew the uses of electrical currents, erotic jolts that were lively with a cross-grained politics of sex. Exceptional women of that era were more interesting, more vivid, more dramatic—if sometimes more troubled and vulnera-

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ble and prone to folly—than some of the ironclads that emerged in Washington later on, after Mary's death, evolving through the generation of Barbara Jordan and Bella Abzug and on into the accession of Hillary Clinton or Condoleezza Rice. The political success of women—still only partial—sometimes has the perversely flattening and narrowing effect of making them (much like male politicians) a little dull, a little relentless and charmlessly self-important. Although Sarah Palin, of course, proved to be, for better or for worse, not dull.

Kennedy did not treat Mary Meyer as one of his mere sexual conveniences. He cherished a quizzical respect for her originality and independence. He told Ben Bradlee, more than once, "Mary would be rough to live with." Bradlee, her brother-in-law, agreed.

My mother, Elise Morrow, wrote a syndicated column called "Capital Capers" that appeared in papers around the country. She had an extravagant admiration for Cissy Patterson, though she disapproved of Patterson's anti-FDR isolationism. My mother's column worked the after-dark borderline between Perle Mesta's territory (parties, ladies, gossip, Embassy Row, the things that senators and congressmen said at night after several drinks) and the men's world of power and cold war.

My mother was a small woman who looked a bit like Ingrid Bergman and affected a knowing Mae West swagger. I have a photograph of her posed behind her Smith Corona, wearing long black evening gloves, with a glass of white wine on the table beside her. She knew how to drink like a man, and how to cuss like a man as well, a talent that Lyndon Johnson found hilarious. She could always get his attention.

One night at some political dinner at the Shoreham Hotel she sat next to Richard Nixon, then a young congressman. They both got a little drunk. My mother told Nixon he should get out of politics because he did not understand people and if he did not get out, things would end badly. The next day Nixon telephoned my father at his office at the *Saturday Evening Post*, where he was an

editor, and said, "Hugh, can't you control your wife?" The answer was no.

Nixon's own wife went a separate and, when possible, more private road. An attractive, able, courageous woman, Pat Nixon had no interest in banging her head against the Washington wall that my mother banged her head against. She regarded women like my mother, media types, as the enemy. She settled into what turned out to be the complicated fate of being Mrs. Richard Nixon.

My mother had two marriages and seven children. She was an avid, headlong and brilliantly self-educated woman (married at 15!) who wanted a great deal (motherhood, a career as a great writer, lovers). Her fate was complicated as well.

Mary Meyer did not survive. My mother did. She lived to be 84. She thought now and then of writing a memoir called *Before My Time*. On a drizzly morning not many months ago, as she had wished, my brothers and my sister and I brought her ashes—coarse, grainy, salt-and-pepper ashes, all that was left of a vivid life—to the bank of the Potomac above Great Falls and scattered them on the surface of the brown, swollen river. The ashes swirled off downstream toward Washington, and for a second I imagined them floating down by Georgetown, passing over a pistol in the mud.

LANCE MORROW, *a former essayist for* Time, *is writing a biography of Henry Luce.*

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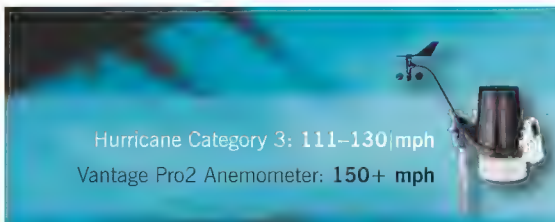

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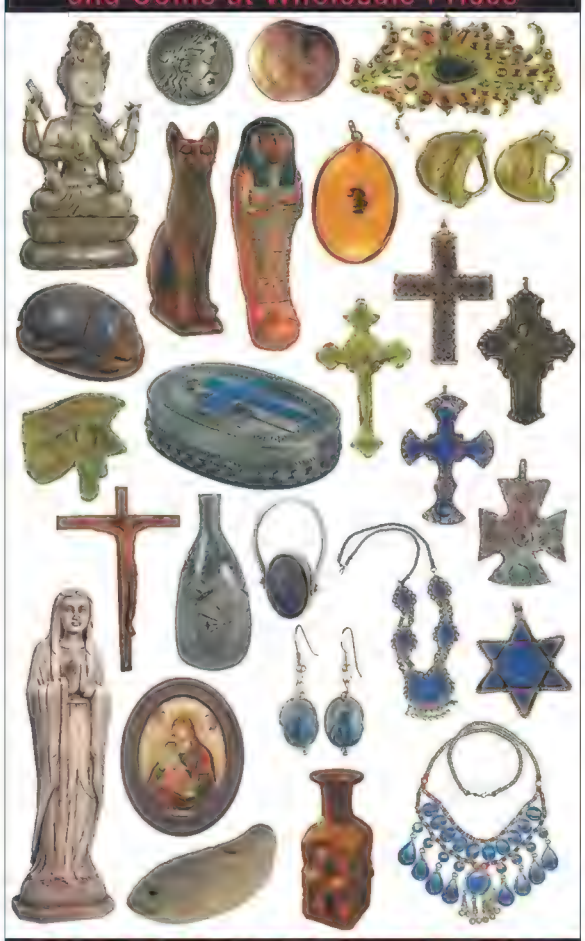

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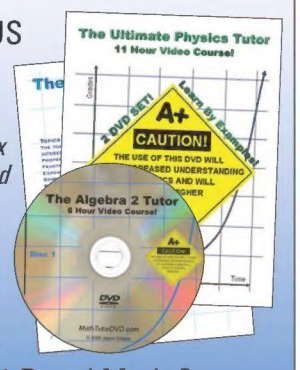

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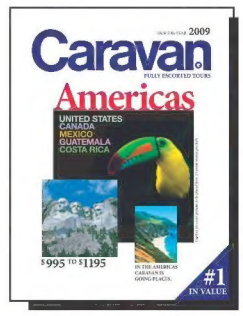

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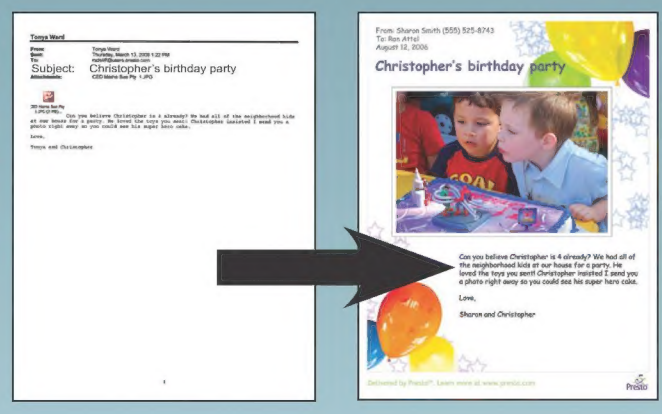

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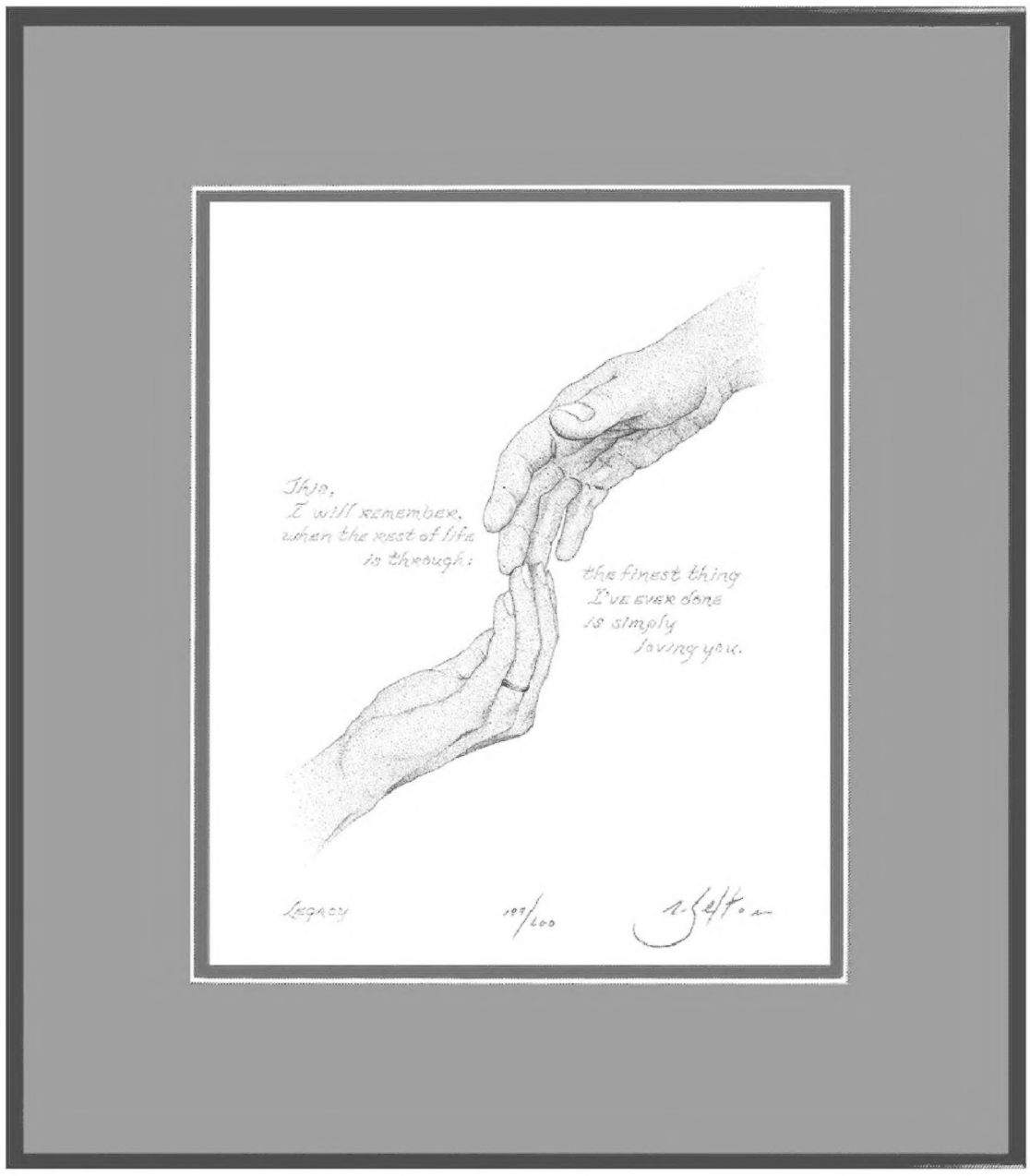

The poem reads: *"This I will remember,*
when the rest of life is through:
the finest thing I've ever done
is simply loving you."

Dear Reader,

The drawing you see above is called "Legacy." It is completely composed of dots of ink. After writing the poem, I worked with a quill pen and placed thousands of these dots, one at a time, to create this gift in honor of the love shared by two of my dearest friends.

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Amazon Warriors

Thanks to the Internet, everyone's a book critic

BY ANN HODGMAN

I **ONCE HAD A JOB** writing jacket copy for children's books. All I had to do was summarize the plot and end with a question like "Can the triplets escape the Curse of the Dead Leopard?" The series was so popular that people would have bought the books if I'd just typed out the Cyrillic alphabet, but the job got me interested in jacket copy. Now I judge books as much by their jacket copy as their content. If there's a mention of a charlady detective, a dog in danger or the word "Texas," I put the book back on the shelf.

But you can't read book jackets on Amazon.com. (Well, sometimes you can, but it's too technical to go into here.) Instead you have to rely on reader reviews, which are often richer—or at least crazier. Like a million times crazier. Take the following—which, like all the reviews quoted here, I swear I didn't make up:

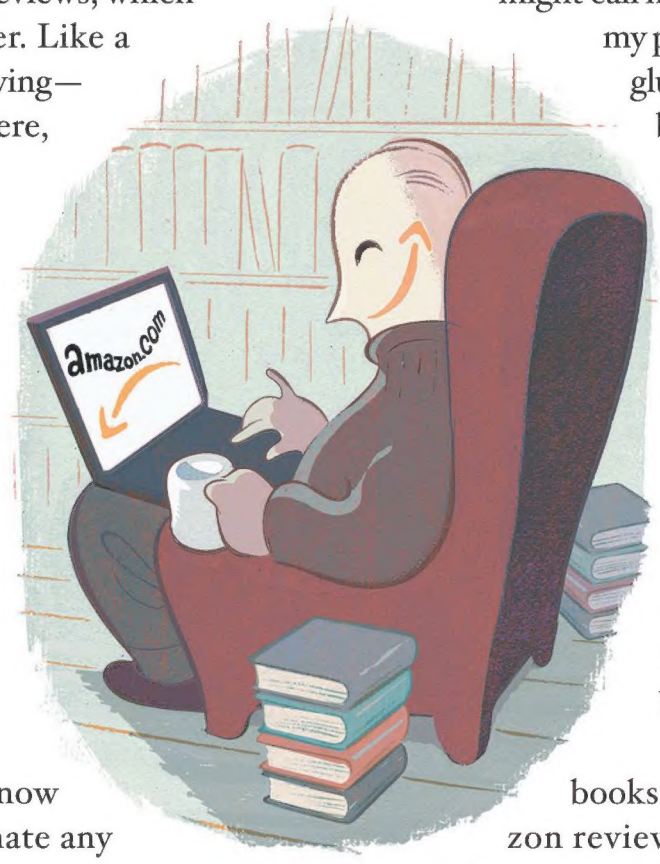
"I have read four books on narcissism and this by far is the best. I enjoyed it so much, I bought my sister a copy and sent it to her in Seattle. I bought yet another copy and wrote a letter to my ex-boyfriend's mother and informed her that her son is a narcissist and asked her to read the book so she could understand him as I have done seven months after our breakup. *My whole life makes perfect sense.*"

That's wonderful! And now I know enough about you to suspect I'll hate any book you like.

Amazon readers get mad when their favorite novelists betray them. "The author's decision to kill off a main character at the very end is unforgivable," wails one anguished, ellipses-loving soul. "If you want to write about social injustices, then don't be a serial detective writer . . . killing off people who matter to your readers and then justifying it by acting like your [sic] some Tolstoy does not work for me . . . and I am not alone . . . Get back to reality."

Even characters who survive death by plot twist can disappoint. "What can one expect from a teenager whose father is a pathological liar who is in jail for assault and whose mother has absolutely no respect for the laws against breaking and entering, forgery, concealing evidence (and that's just in this book—in previous books her lawbreaking would certainly have landed her in prison)."

And woe to any cookbook author whose instructions the reviewer decides to ignore. "I was disappointed because the baguettes beginning on page 335 failed to rise enough and when baked they were what you might call mini-baguettes. One possible source of my problem is that I used a Canadian high-gluten bread flour instead of the specific brands of unbleached all-purpose flour insisted upon on page 338."



Yes, that's *one* possible source of the problem. But then, readers who blindly follow a book's advice instead of using their own judgment can run into trouble, too. "I thought this book was great. I read all about the rabbit diseases, so when this book said that a certain symptom was normal I ignored [it]. Now my rabbit is dead." (We can only hope that this reader doesn't consult books on human diseases.)

I guess I should confess that my own books have received some disturbing Amazon reviews. (I try not to look, but once in a while—say, every 20 minutes—I give in.) One of my cookbooks elicited the comment, "Sorry to say, Ann, but many of these recipes just made me think 'yuck.'"

I promise, however, that the recipes are good. If you don't believe me, just read the book jacket.

ANN HODGMAN *has written three cookbooks and more than 40 children's books.*

ERIC PALMA